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It may be noted that most of the writings of Sri Aurobindo in the *Arya* were later revised by him and published in book form.

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No. IV

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

(*English Edition of the "Revue de Grande Synthèse."*)

Editors :

SRI AUROBINDO GHOSE — PAUL & MIRRA RICHARD.



15th August 1917

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MAN AND THE EVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

World-existence, it clearly appears, is a harmonic rhythm of the Absolute's self-manifestation and self-experience in which there are certain eternal metres or measures, *chhandansi*, unchanging, ever-persistent and running through the whole strain,—the basic interplay of the cosmic principles, *tattwas*, which all fall under the seven powers of Being, the seven eternal notes of existence ; but also there is an evolutionary strain which constitutes the progression of the divine harmony. It is this evolutionary rhythm which we have to seize in its right emphasis and incidence * rising from the foundation of the eternal notes, if we are to understand the divine purpose in the cosmos. This progression—we have spoken of it as evolutionary, but it is, more properly speaking a double movement of involution and evolution,—moves between the two great poles of Knowledge and Ignorance or, again more properly speaking, perfect self-conscience and inconscience ; for the full self-consciousness of Spirit disappears, involved in the inconscience of crude Force

* It is the great value of modern thought that it helps us to restore this emphasis which the ancient *septs* perceived profoundly, but which the ancient *thinkers*, whether Vedantist or other philosophers, either missed or minimised.

in Matter, and has to evolve again out of it through that partial knowledge of the mentalised individual being to which we give the name of the Ignorance. Now here there are two possibilities. Either Spirit first involves itself in the pure inconscience of the material universe ignorant of Spirit and, evolving out of it, again involves all being into a pure consciousness of Spirit ignorant of the cosmic activity, or else it has involved all the seven principles of being in the material inconscience in order to manifest a rhythm of universe of which Matter shall be the first dominant keynote and in that rhythm it evolves again its hidden principles, all the six concealed notes of its music, into a full self-consciousness in which Spirit is the dominant note and contains, deploys, governs, gives their real value to the others. It is in this latter view that we have seen the true explanation of the harmonies of world-existence.

The other view we have rejected because it makes of the self-consciousness of Spirit another kind of ignorance or nescience, the nescience of its own cosmic activities. In order to get rid of that paradox, in order to show that this nescience is the true Knowledge to which man has to arrive, we have to invent the illusionist explanation, that the world is not a manifestation of the Absolute, but an illusion of the individual soul which is itself an illusion,—since there is no individual but only the One,—a non-existence imagined by a non-existent, and the manifestation therefore not of a reality, but of a falsehood. This falsehood is got rid of by getting rid of the falsifier, the individual being; by forgetting or losing ourselves in the Absolute, who is for ever empty of all cosmic activity, we forget or lose this dream of a cosmos, and such nescience of cosmos is the true knowledge. But this logic, we see, is the getting rid of one paradox by another yet more intricate. Nevertheless it has so woven itself about this whole question of the Knowledge and the Ignorance

on which the riddle of existence hinges, that we have had to meet it at every turn in order to keep the field clear for another and more satisfying conclusion.

The harmonic rhythm of a complex world-existence,—not of the material universe alone, as we shall see,—is the music indeed of one Existence whom in its completeness, *pŕuam*, inconceivable by our limited minds, we call the Absolute ; but its oneness is not an exclusive unity ; it is eternally multiple and manifold. It plays itself out in the relations of self-experience between three powers of the Absolute,—the transcendent, that which usually we call God, the cosmic or universal being of God which supports the multiple manifestation of the Absolute, and the individual being of the Divine which supports and inhabits the myriad forms taken by the Absolute in its manifestation. In this individual being and its consciousness, its soul developing towards full self-consciousness of the secret Divinity, is the key of the whole evolutionary movement, the rhythmic progression, the swelling of the sevenfold note of being out of ignorance into knowledge, out of inconscience into divine consciousness. The Absolute, transcendent and universal, is present in every individual. Therefore the growth of the individual consciousness moves towards the discovery of the Absolute in everything relative, in all relative experiences ; for by seizing on that it is laying its grasp on its own supreme reality. By transcending self-ignorance, the individual rises in consciousness, as we may say, till he reaches the knowledge of the oneness of his being with the transcendent being of God ; so he arrives at supreme self-knowledge and is able to live within himself subjectively a divine life capable of spiritual perfection. By enlarging the positive side of his self-ignorance, which is really a partial self-knowledge, he breaks out of the ego in free self-extension until he reaches the knowledge of the oneness of his being with the being of the cosmos and of all

individuals ; so he arrives at his widest self-knowledge and is able to live in a vast universal self—in which all objects of his vision are seen as one with the subject, one self with him,—a divine life capable of the perfection of all divine relations. To seize on the absolute in the relative, to arrive through his individual being in cosmos into the transcendent and to enlarge it at the same time into universality is therefore the crowning movement of man's increasing self-knowledge. To be able, by the force of this self-knowledge, to live in a spiritual sense of the Absolute, in a perfect unity with the transcendent Divine and in both an essential and a harmonic unity with the cosmic Being and the self in all existences, is his divine living.

But here a question arises, to which the answer has indeed been given already, but must now be made explicit. Supposing this world-existence to be a manifestation of the Divine, why should it be necessary to suppose within it an evolution of consciousness centred here in man, with divine being and divine living as its culmination ? Since all is a manifestation of the Absolute and the Absolute is the Divine, all is divine, each form of life, each way of being. We see that the principles of the universal manifestation are for ever the same and, with whatever variations in Time, the principal divisions of existence seem also to be for ever the same. Man like the metal, the plant, the animal, the god, is one of these divisions, a special kind of existence with his own nature, laws, limits, capacities, his *swadharma*, to use the term of the Gita. Should not then each be considered divine in its own kind and should not the perfection of each being lie in the observation of the law of its own nature, its full play certainly, but not any kind of transcendence ? When all are stationary and content in their own being, even the gods, why should man alone be discontent, seek to transcend himself, to grow into the superman, to put on the

nature and capacities of the god, to become divine? His perfection should rather lie in a complete human life, in the fullness of his *savadharma*, and there is no justification for any ideal of a self-transcendence and a divine living. Sachchidananda manifests the world for his self-delight in manifestation and in each form and way of being there is its appropriate way of the delight of being; to look beyond, to seek for an object, aim or good beyond our self-sufficient humanity is to bring in a teleological element into our view of existence which seems to have no justification except in the restless desire and imagination of the human mentality. In other words, the progress of humanity, so far as there is any real progress, must move within the cycles of our known human mentality and psychology,—very much as an old theory conceived of the cosmic manifestation moving in a repetition of unprogressive cycles, for in them progression is compensated for by retrogression and things always remain eventually the same.

It is perfectly true that the whole sense and object of self-existence is the delight of being, of self-consciousness, of self-force and their works or their rest from works, and that Sachchidananda has no object of existence beyond that existence itself. His world-being is not teleological in the sense of having an aim beyond himself which it has to reach; but there is no reason why he should not admit a teleological element within himself, no reason, that is to say, why a given movement of the world-being, as distinct from the totality, should not have a purpose beyond itself, beyond the immediate limits of its growing capacity, should not in a word be the nexus of an evolutionary becoming. There may be a progressive delight in existence as well as the delight of self-repetition. Undoubtedly Sachchidananda takes delight in each way of his being and each form of his being or that way and that form could not persist, could not even at all have ex-

isted. Therefore each way of being has its own law of existence, its nature, its capacity and is firmly founded by the divine delight in that law, nature, and capacity. Each star is satisfied in the movement of its own orbit ; each living creature seeks its measure of possible delight of existence within the gamut of being, force and consciousness assigned to it. But this does not prevent each from being a grade, a note in a rising evolutionary rhythm, And if every general kind is fixed, like the plant, the animal, after once it has appeared, that certainly proves both that the Self-existent still takes delight in that form and that its maintenance is still necessary, even after higher forms have been evolved, as a support, a fixed helping note of the evolutionary rhythm ; but it does not follow that the law of fixity shall remain unchanged in all the grades of the ascension ; rather it seems rational that there should appear a form, a way of existence which shall be the nexus of a conscious transition.

Evolution is a self-evident fact and law within the rhythm of cosmic being or at least of the material universe, quite apart from the validity or otherwise of the modern evolutionist theory. Sachchidananda as the soul in Nature does move from grade to grade of his manifest being. The doctrine of the scientific evolutionists evolving the physical form of man by a series of developments from the protoplasm through reptile and fish and bird and animal may or may not be true ; it is possible also that it may be only a partial truth and that certain stages of the evolution, even all, or at any rate the appearance of man, that great and apparently sudden leap beyond the animal, may have been determined by a psychological intervention of which, naturally, the evidence of physical Nature can bear no record. But this is proved beyond a doubt that, by whatever means, there has been an evolution in Nature, —or, to put it otherwise, that the Spirit in the world has, in the language of the Upanishads, variously created and

ordained different kinds of existence out of one original seed and, we may add, has built up their variations around one original crude pattern, and that in this creation there has been a successive gradation of which man is the highest terrestrial result. The knowledge of this principle of evolutionary successsion is not entirely modern. The Upanishad asserts clearly that in the dealings of the Purusha with the world the form of man came subsequently to the form of the animal, and the Purana suggestively declares that the *tamasic* creation, including the animal, came first in the workings of Rudra ; the *sattwic* intervention of the mental principle, by which man the thinker arrived, is therefore subsequent in the evolutionary rhythm of the earth-creation.

But what is more important than the evolution of forms is the evolution of the self-manifesting soul in things suggested by the phrase in the Purana. Either keeping pace with the physical evolution or acting, we may more reasonably hold, as its secret cause there has been a psychological evolution of the soul in forms ; each ascending grade in the progress of forms has been marked by an ascending grade in the development of life and mind. That is the capital fact of evolution, the key to its whole principle and process. And the most important step has been the appearance of man which is the decisive step, the radical change in the economy of Nature. It is this change which gives us a right to refuse to see in the cycles of man the same mechanical principle of an unprogressive orbit, as in the cycles of the stars or the recurrent life of plant and animal ; it is that he is characteristically a psychological and not a physical being, a mind and soul much more than a body and not like the others a body much more than a soul. All the rest from the star to the animal belong, in the phrase of the Purana, to the *tamasic* creation in which the principle of inertia and ignorance predominates ; dominated by the principle

of ignorance they have not developed that self-consciousness which is the soul's completed awakening out of the grasp of the inconscient force of material Nature ; dominated by the companion principle of inertia, — for according to the degree of consciousness is the degree of self-initiating force of consciousness, — they act under the control of Prakriti, the executive force-impulse in Nature, and do not participate consciously in their own evolution. In man the sattwic or luminous principle emerges from the hold of the tamasic ; he has stepped beyond the dividing line, crossed the Rubicon beyond which lies the conquest of his self-empire, *swarajya* ; he is a self-conscious being. In the tamasic creation Purusha is subject phenomenally to Prakriti, the soul driven helplessly by Nature ; in the sattwic Purusha begins to lay hold on Prakriti, the soul first begins to participate consciously in her works, then to master Nature.

Where must this tendency of man, the thinking and self-conscious being, stop and say " I can go no further ? what are his limits, — not the immediate and actual, but the potential and ultimate ? Or are there any limits ? Undoubtedly, man like other beings has a law of his nature, a *swadharma* ; in its fulfilment must lie his perfection and that perfection must proceed on its lines and within its limits. But the decisive part of his *swadharma* seems to be this that he is a self-evolving soul, a nexus of the psychological evolution from the ignorance to full self-consciousness, and in that then must lie the determining line of his perfection. He has started with a limited self-consciousness and has been constantly enriching and increasing it, constantly gathering into it all that he can realise of the world and of God, of what is around him and of what is above him ; is there any reason to suppose that he need stop short of enlarging it into unity with the universal and the infinite ? His progress has been a greater and greater conscious participation of the soul in the

workings of the force of Nature within him and the character of this greatening has been an increasing mastery of these workings ; his constant impulse is to rule himself and his environment ; but to indubitable rule he cannot arrive unless he becomes united with the Divine who is the sole real master of Nature. That union then would seem to be his goal. In a word, he is in his nature, his *svadharma*, a soul participating in its own evolution or self-manifestation and that evolution is a constant self-transcendence and taking up of his lower past self into a higher transfiguring self ; he has transcended his beginnings, he has transcended each stage he has reached ; he must surely transcend all his present and past-self-realisation, until he stands in union with the perfect self-knowledge and mastery of the transcendent Divine above cosmic Nature. For self-conscious Purusha is self-conscious Sachchidananda and enlarging its self-knowledge and self-mastery it must reach in the end the perfect being of Sachchidananda revealed in his eternal Godhead.

The limit of man's progress and perfection must be determined by the limit of his conscious aspiration which is always a promise of the power to which Sachchidananda in him intends to attain. It is the greatest possible error of our reason to take the aspiration of the soul for a mere groundless imagination because it exceeds the actual fact of our materially attained knowledge or our present mode of being and limit of capacity. This aspiration is an indication of the will of the infinite divinity within us, it is its consciousness of that which it bears within it still unexpressed. If you insist on calling it imagination,—it is much more,—it is still the creative imagination of the Divine, the foreseeing of a figure of itself which it has still to shape. And what we must look to, is the highest imagination or aspiration of earth's greatest souls, for they are the mirrors of our greatest capacity. Even if the mass of men rest content with what is already achieved

or cannot rise beyond what their limited practical reason sees immediately in front of it, that incapacity is not the test of man's destiny ; the true indices are to be found in our greatest positive aspiration and not in any partial or complete negation. And if man is often so apt to fix his hopes beyond in another world and despair of his earthly life or to think sometimes that only by an escape from the world can he attain to the highest for which he longs, that arises from an excessive sense of the gulf which separates the actuality from the thing that he hopes to become and it cannot be taken for the last word of the Divine within him. His aspiration, his vision of his potentiality is to exchange his present human for a divine being, nature, consciousness, knowledge, power, felicity, and this hope, this faith while it soars beyond earth to already existent heavens, yet returns also constantly to earth with the promise of the kingdom of heaven to his terrestrial being. To transcend and yet embrace heaven and earth in the efflorescence of the Divine within him is the largest word of his aspiration and the whole index of his destiny.

Essays on the Gita

THE SACRIFICE AND THE LORD OF THE SACRIFICE

We have, before we can proceed further, to gather up all that has been said in its main principles. The whole of the Gita's gospel of works rests upon its idea of sacrifice and it contains in fact the eternal truth of God and the world and works of which the human mind seizes ordinarily only fragmentary notions and standpoints and builds upon them its various theories of life and ethics and religion, but to the entirety of which it must always tend to return when it returns in its ages of true enlightenment to the synthetic entirety of its knowledge. It reposes upon this fundamental Vedantic truth that all being is the one Brahman and all existence the wheel of Brahman, a divine movement opening out from God and returning to God. All is the activity of Nature, the power of the Divine, working out the consciousness and will of the supreme Purusha, the divine Soul master of her works and inhabitant of her forms, for his satisfaction, descending into the absorption of the forms of things and the works of life and mind to return through mind and self-knowledge to the conscious possession of the Soul that dwells within her. In this cycle of Nature the Purusha assumes three eternal poises. It manifests itself in the mutable, the finite, the many, all existences, *sarvabhûtāni*, it is the finite personality of these million creatures with their infinite diversities and various relations and it is the

soul and force of the action of the gods, the cosmic powers of the Divine who preside over the workings of the life of the universe and are different universal forms and personalities of the one Self and supreme Person. Secret behind and within all forms and existences it is the immutable, the infinite, the impersonal, the one unchanging and indivisible Self in which all these many are one and by returning to which the active, finite personality of the individual being recovers the largeness of its universality and the peace and poise of its unity with all in the indivisible Infinite. But the highest secret of all, *uttamam rahasyam*, is the Purushottama ; this is the supreme Divine, God, who possesses both the infinite and the finite and in whom the personal and the impersonal, the one Self and the many existences, being and becoming, the world-action and the supracosmic peace, *pravritti* and *nivritti*, meet, are united, are possessed together and in each other. In God all things find their secret truth and their absolute reconciliation.

All truth of works must depend upon this truth of being. All active existence is a sacrifice of works offered by Prakriti to Purusha, by Nature to the supreme and infinite Soul through the desire of the multiple finite Soul within her. Life is an altar to which she brings her workings and the fruits of her workings and lays them before whatever aspect of the Divinity the consciousness in her has reached for whatever result of the sacrifice the desire of the living soul can seize on as its immediate or its highest good. According to the grade of consciousness and being which the soul has reached in Nature, will be the Divinity it worships, the delight which it seeks and the hope for which it sacrifices. In the movement of the mutable Purusha in nature all is interchange ; a mutual giving and receiving is the law of Life without which it can not for one moment endure, and this fact is the stamp of the divine creative Will on the world it has manifested

in its being, the proof that with sacrifice as their eternal companion the Lord of creatures has created all these existences. The universal law of sacrifice is the sign that the world is of God and belongs to God and that life is his dominion and house of worship and not a field for the self-satisfaction of the independent ego ; not the fulfilment of the ego but the discovery of God, the worship and seeking of the Divine and the Infinite through a constantly enlarging sacrifice culminating in a perfect self-giving founded on a perfect self-knowledge is that to which the experience of life is intended to lead.

But the individual being begins with ignorance and persists long in ignorance. Acutely conscious of himself he sees the ego as the cause and whole meaning of life and not the Divine. He sees himself as the doer of works and does not see that all the workings of existence including his own internal and external activities are the workings of one universal Nature and nothing else. He sees himself as the enjoyer of works and imagines that for him all exists and him Nature ought to satisfy and obey his personal will ; he does not see that she is not at all concerned with satisfying him or at all careful of his will, but obeys a higher universal will and seeks to satisfy a God-head who transcends her and her works and creations ; his finite being, his will and his satisfactions are hers and not his and she offers them at every moment as a sacrifice to the Divine of whose purpose in her she makes all this the covert instrumentation. Because of this ignorance whose seal is egoism, the creature ignores the law of sacrifice and seeks to take all he can for himself and gives only what Nature by her internal and external compulsion forces him to give. He can really take nothing except what she allows him to receive as his portion, what the divine Powers within her yield to his desire. The egoistic soul in a world of sacrifice is as if a thief or robber who takes what these Powers bring to him and has no mind to give

in return. He misses the true meaning of life and, since he does not use life and works for the enlargement and elevation of his being through sacrifice, he lives in vain.

Only when the individual being begins to perceive and acknowledge in his acts the value of the self in others as well as the power and needs of his own ego, begins to perceive universal Nature behind his own workings and through the cosmic godheads gets some glimpse of the One and the Infinite, is he on his way to the transcendence of his limitation by the ego and the discovery of his soul. He begins to discover a law other than that of his desires, to which his desires must be more and more subordinated and subjected ; he develops the purely egoistic into the understanding and ethical being. He begins to give more value to the claims of the self in others and less to the claims of his ego ; he admits the strife between egoism and altruism and by the increase of his altruistic tendencies he prepares the enlargement of his own consciousness and being. He begins to perceive Nature and divine Powers in Nature to whom he owes sacrifice, adoration, obedience, because it is by them and by their law that the workings both of the mental and the material world are controlled and he learns that only by increasing their presence and their greatness in his thought and will and life can he himself increase his powers, knowledge, right action and the satisfactions which these things bring to him. Thus he adds the religious and supraphysical to the material and egoistic sense of life and prepares himself to rise through the finite to the Infinite.

But this is an intermediate stage. It is still subject to the law of desire, the centrality of all things in the conceptions and needs of his ego and the control of his being as well as his works by Nature, though it is a regulated and governed desire, a clarified ego and a Nature more and more subtilised and enlightened by the sattwic, the highest natural principle. All this

is still within the domain, the enlarged domain of the mutable, finite and personal. The real self-knowledge and consequently the right way of works lies beyond ; for the sacrifice done with knowledge is the highest sacrifice and alone brings a perfect working. That can only come when he perceives that the self in him and the self in others are one being and this self is something higher than the ego, an infinite, an impersonal, a universal existence in whom all move and have their being,—when he perceives that all the cosmic gods to whom he offers his sacrifice are forms of one infinite Godhead and when again, leaving all his limited and limiting conceptions of that one Godhead, he perceives him to be the supreme and ineffable Deity who is at once the finite and the infinite, the one self and the many, beyond Nature though manifesting himself through Nature, beyond limitation by qualities though formulating the power of his being through infinite quality. This is the Purushotama to whom the sacrifice has to be offered, not for the transient fruits of his works, but for the possession of the Divine and in order to live in harmony and union with the Divine.

In other words, man's way to liberation and perfection lies through an increasing impersonality. It is his ancient and constant experience that the more he opens himself to the impersonal and infinite, to that which is pure and high and one and common in all things and beings, the impersonal and infinite in Nature, the impersonal and infinite in life, the impersonal and infinite in his own subjectivity, the less he is bound by his ego and by the circle of the finite, the more he feels a sense of largeness, peace, pure happiness. The pleasure, joy, satisfaction which the finite by itself can give or the ego in its own right attain, is transitory, petty and insecure. To dwell entirely in the ego-sense and its finite conceptions, powers, satisfactions is to find this world for ever

full of transience and suffering, *anityam asukham* ; the finite life is always troubled by a certain sense of vanity for this fundamental reason that the finite is not the whole or the highest truth of life ; life is not entirely real until it opens into the sense of the infinite. It is for this reason that the Gita opens its gospel of works by insisting on the Brahmic consciousness, the impersonal life, that great object of the discipline of the ancient sages. For the impersonal, the infinite, the One in which all the permanent, mutable, multiple activity of the world finds above itself its base of permanence, security and peace, is the immobile Self, the Akshara, the Brahman. To raise one's consciousness and the poise of one's being out of limited personality into this infinite and impersonal Brahman is the first spiritual necessity. To see all beings in this one Self is the knowledge which raises the soul out of egoistic ignorance and its works and results ; to live in it is to acquire peace and firm spiritual foundation.

The way to bring about this great transformation follows a double path ; for there is the way of knowledge and there is the way of works, and the Gita combines them in a firm synthesis. The way of knowledge is to turn the understanding, the intelligent will away from its downward absorption in the workings of the mind and the senses and upward to the self, the Purusha or Brahman ; it is to make it dwell always on the one idea of the one Self and not in the many-branching conceptions of the mind and many-streaming impulses of desire. Taken by itself this path would seem to lead to the complete renunciation of works, to an immobile passivity and to the severance of the soul from Nature. But in reality such an absolute renunciation, passivity and severance are impossible. Purusha and Prakriti are twin principles of being which cannot be severed, and so long as we remain in Nature, our workings in Nature must continue, even though they may take a different form or rather a different sense from

those of the unenlightened soul. The real renunciation—for renunciation, *sannyasa*, there must be—is not the fleeing from works, but the slaying of ego and desire. The way is to abandon attachment to the fruit of works even while doing them, and the way is to recognise Nature as the agent and leave her to do her works and to live in the soul as the witness and sustainer, watching and sustaining her, but not attached either to her actions or their fruits. The ego, the limited and troubled personality is then quieted and merged in the consciousness of the one impersonal Self, while the works of Nature continue to our vision to operate through all these “becomings” or existences who are now seen by us as living and acting and moving, under her impulsion entirely, in this one infinite Being ; our own finite existence is seen and felt to be only one of these and its workings are seen and felt to be those of Nature, not of our real self which is the silent, impersonal unity. The ego claimed them as its own doings and therefore we thought them ours ; but the ego is now dead and henceforth they are no longer ours, but Nature’s. We have achieved by the slaying of ego impersonality in our being and consciousness ; we have achieved by the renunciation of desire impersonality in the works of our nature. We are free not only in inaction, but in action ; our liberty does not depend on a physical and temperamental immobility and vacancy, nor do we fall from freedom directly we act. Even in a full current of natural action the impersonal soul in us remains calm, still, and free.

The liberation given by this perfect impersonality is real, is complete, is indispensable ; but is it the last word, the end of the whole matter ? All life, all world-existence, we have said, is the sacrifice offered by Nature to the Purusha, the one and secret soul in Nature, in whom all her workings take place ; but its real sense is obscured in us by ego, by desire, by our limited, active, multiple

personality. We have risen out of ego and desire and limited personality and by impersonality, its great corrective, we have found the impersonal Godhead ; we have identified our being with the one self and soul in whom all exist. The sacrifice of works continues, conducted not by ourselves any longer, but by Nature,—Nature operating through the finite part of our being,—mind, senses, body,—but in our infinite being. But to whom then is this sacrifice offered and with what object ? For the Impersonal has no activity and no desires, no object to be gained, no dependence for anything on all this world of creatures ; it exists for itself, in its own self-delight in its own immutable, eternal being. We may have to do works without desire as a means in order to reach this impersonal self-existence and self-delight, but that movement once executed the object of works is finished ; the sacrifice is no longer needed. Works may even then continue because Nature continues and her activities ; but there is no longer any further object in these works. The sole reason for our continuing to act after liberation is purely negative ; it is the compulsion of Nature on our finite parts of mind and body. But if that be all, then, first, works may well be whittled down and reduced to a minimum, may be confined to what Nature's compulsion absolutely will have from our bodies ; and secondly, even if there is no reduction to a minimum,—since action does not matter and inaction also is no object,—then the nature of the work also does not matter. Arjuna, once having attained knowledge, may continue to fight out the battle of Kurukshetra, following his old Kshatriya nature, or he may leave it and live the life of the Sannyasin, following his new quietistic impulse. Which of these things he does, becomes quite indifferent ; or rather the second is the better way, since it will discourage more quickly the impulses of Nature which still have a hold on his mind owing to past created tendency and, when his body has

fallen from him, he will securely depart into the Infinite and Impersonal with no necessity of returning again to the trouble and madness of life in this transient and sorrowful world, *anityam asukham manyi lokam*.

If this were so, the Gita would lose all its meaning and its whole object would be defeated. But the Gita insists that the nature of the action does matter and that there is a positive sanction for continuance in works, not only that one quite negative and mechanical reason, the objectless compulsion of Nature. There is still, after the ego has been conquered, a divine Lord and enjoyer of the sacrifice, *bhoktâram yajnatapasâm*, and there is still an object in the sacrifice. The impersonal Brahman is not the last word, not the highest secret of our being; impersonal and personal, finite and infinite are only two opposite, yet concomitant aspects of the divine Being who is both these things at once. God is an ever unmanifest Infinite ever self-impelled to manifest himself in the finite; he is the great impersonal Person of whom all personalities are partial appearances; he is the Divine who reveals himself in the human being, he is the Lord seated in the heart of man. Knowledge teaches us to see all beings in the one impersonal self, and then through this impersonality to see them in this God, *atmanî atha mayi*, "in the Self and then in Me." Our ego, our limiting personalities stand in the way of our recognising the Divine in all in whom all have their being; for, subject to personality, we see only such fragmentary aspects of Him as the finite appearances of things suffer us to seize. We have to arrive at him not through our lower personality, but through the high, infinite and impersonal part of our being, through this self one in all in whose existence the whole world is comprised. This infinite containing, not excluding all finite appearances, this impersonal admitting, not rejecting all individualities and personalities, this immobile sustaining, pervading, containing, not standing apart from all the

movement of Nature, is the clear mirror in which the Divine will reveal His being. Therefore it is to the Impersonal that we have first to attain ; through the cosmic deities, through the aspects of the finite alone the perfect knowledge of God cannot be totally obtained. But neither is the silent immobility of the impersonal Self, apart from all that it sustains, contains and pervades, the whole satisfying truth of the Divine. That is the Purushottama, who possesses both the Akshara and the Kshara ; seated in the immobility, he manifests himself in the movement and action of cosmic Nature. To him even after liberation the sacrifice of works continues to be offered.

The real goal of the Yoga is then union with the divine Purushottama and not merely immergence in the impersonal Being. To raise our whole existence to the Divine Being, dwell in him, (*mayyeva nivasishyasi*), be at one with him, to unify our consciousness with his, to make our fragmentary nature a reflection of his perfect nature, to be inspired in our thought and sense wholly by the divine knowledge, to be moved in will and action utterly and faultlessly by the divine will, to lose desire in his love and delight, is man's perfection ; it is that which the Gita describes as the highest secret. It is the true goal and the last sense of human living and the highest step in our progressive sacrifice of works.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE LADDER OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

The transcendence of this lower triple being and this lower triple world, to which ordinarily our consciousness and its powers and results belong,—described by the Vedic seers as a breaking beyond the two firmaments of heaven and earth,—opens out a field of being to which the normal existence of man even in its highest and widest flights is still a stranger and to that therefore it is difficult for him to rise. A separation, acute in practice though unreal in essence, divides the total being of man, the microcosm, divides also that of the world-being, the macrocosm. Both have a higher hemisphere of their existence marked away from a lower hemisphere; they are the *parardha* and *aparardha* of the ancient wisdom. The higher hemisphere is the perfect and eternal reign of the Spirit; there it manifests its infinities, deploys the glories of its illimitable being, illimitable consciousness and knowledge, illimitable force and power, illimitable delight. The lower hemisphere belongs equally to the Spirit, but here it is veiled, closely, thickly by its inferior self-expression of limiting mind, confined life and dividing body. The Self is shrouded in name and form, its consciousness is broken up by the division between the internal and external, the individual and universal; its vision and sense are turned

outward; its force, limited by division of its consciousness, works in fetters; its knowledge, will, power, delight, divided therefore and limited, are open to the experience of their contrary or perverse forms, ignorance, weakness and suffering. We can always become aware of the Self or Spirit in ourselves by turning our sense and vision inward; we can discover the Self or Spirit in the external world and its phenomena by plunging them there too inward through the veil of names and forms to that which dwells in these or else stands behind. By so doing our normal consciousness may become by reflection aware of the infinite being, consciousness and delight of the Self and share in their passive or static infinity, but we can only to a very limited extent share in its active or dynamic manifestation of knowledge, power and joy. Even this cannot be effected without a long and difficult effort and as the result of many lives of progressive self-development; so much is our normal consciousness bound to the law of its lower hemisphere of being. To understand the possibility of transcending it, we must restate in a practical formula the relations of the worlds which constitute the two hemispheres.

All is determined by the Spirit, for all from being to matter is manifestation of the Spirit; but the Spirit, Self or Being determines the world it lives in and the experiences of its consciousness, force and delight in that world by some poise of the relations of Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature, in one of other of its principles. Poised in the principle of Matter, it becomes the physical self of a physical universe in the reign of a physical Nature, Spirit absorbed in its experience of Matter, dominated by the ignorance and inertia of the tamasic principle proper to physical being. In the individual it becomes a materialised soul, *annamaya purusha*, whose life and mind have developed out of the ignorance and inertia of the material principle and are subject to their funda-

mental limitations ; for life works in dependence on the body, mind in dependence on the vital or nervous being, spirit itself is limited and divided in its self-realisation and its powers by the limitations and divisions of the Mind. This soul lives in a physical body and takes normally the experiences of its physical organs, senses, materialised life and mind and limited spiritual experience as the whole truth of existence.

Man also is a spirit living as a mental being in physical Nature, in a physical body ; but at first he is this mental being materialised and he thinks the materialised soul, *annamaya purusha*, to be his real self, takes, as the Upanishad expresses it, Matter for the Brahman because he sees that from that all is born, by that all lives and to that all return in their passing. His natural highest concept of Spirit is an Infinite inhabiting the material universe, which alone he knows, and manifesting by the power of its presence all its forms. His natural highest conception of himself is a vaguely conceived soul or spirit manifested only in his physical life's experiences, bound to that and on its dissolution returning to the Infinite. But because he has the power of self-development, he can rise beyond these natural conceptions of the materialised soul by a certain derivative experience from the supraphysical planes and worlds. He can concentrate on and develop the mental part of his being,—generally at the expense of this fullness of his vital and physical life,—until it predominates and is open to the beyond. He can concentrate on the Spirit,—and here too usually in the process he turns away more and more from his full mental and physical life and limits and discourages their possibilities as much as his nature will allow,—until his spiritual life predominates and destroys his earthward tendency. For that reason he places his real existence beyond in other worlds, in the heavens of the vital or mental being, and regards life on earth as

a painful or troublesome incident or passage in which he can never arrive at any full enjoyment of his ideal being. Moreover his highest ideal conception of the Self or Spirit is apt to be quietistic, because, as we have seen, it is its static infinity alone of Purusha unlimited by Prakriti which he can fully experience; its dynamic manifestation in him cannot rise entirely above the heavy limitations of physical Nature. The peace of the silent and passive Self is more easily attainable by him, more easily and fully held than the bliss of the infinite activity.

Poised in the principle of Life, the Spirit becomes the vital self of a vital world, the Life-soul of a Life-energy in the reign of a consciously dynamic Nature: it is absorbed in the experiences of the power and play of a conscious Life and dominated by the desire, activity and passion of the rajasic principle proper to vital being. In the individual it becomes a vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣha*, in whose nature the life-energies tyrannise over the mental and physical principles; the physical shapes its activities and formations in response to desire and its imaginations, to the passion and power of life and their formations,—not limiting them as on earth; the mental is limited by, obeys and helps to enrich and fulfil the life of the desires and impulses. This vital soul lives in a vital body composed of subtler matter than the physical, a substance surcharged with conscious energy and capable of much more powerful perceptions, capacities, sense-activities than the gross atomic elements of earth-matter can form. Man has in himself behind his physical being, very close to it, forming with it the most naturally active part of his existence, this vital soul, vital nature, vital body, a whole vital plane connected with the life-world or desire-world in which these principles find their untrammelled play, their easy self-expression.

In proportion as the power of this plane manifests

itself in the physical being, man becomes fuller of vital energy, forceful in his desires, vehement in his passions and emotions, intensely dynamic in his activities ; he becomes the rajasic man. We have seen that is possible for him to awaken in his consciousness to the vital plane, become the vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, put on the vital nature, live in the vital as well as the physical body. If he did this fully,—usually it is under great and salutary limitations,—and without rising beyond, he would become the lower type of the Asura or Titan, a soul of sheer power and life-energy, full of the force of unlimited desire and passion, an active capacity and a colossal rajasic ego in possession of far greater and more various powers than those of the physical man. Even if he developed mind greatly on the vital plane and used its dynamic energy for self-control as well as for self-satisfaction, it would still be with an Asuric energism (*taṇasya*) and for a more governed satisfaction of the rajasic ego. But on the vital plane also it is possible, even as on the physical, to rise beyond the conceptions and energies natural to the desire-soul and the desire-world, to develop a higher mentality and to concentrate upon realisation of the Spirit or Self within the conditions of the vital being and behind or beyond its forms and powers. In this spiritual realisation there would be a less strong necessity of quietism ; for there would be a greater possibility of the active effectuation of the bliss and power of the Infinite. Nevertheless that effectuality could never come anywhere near to perfection ; for the conditions of the desire-world are, like those of the physical, improper to the development of the perfect spiritual life. The vital being also must either develop spirit to the detriment of his fullness, activity and force of life in the lower hemisphere of our existence or else be subject in his activity to the downward attraction of the desire-world. On this plane also perfection is impossible ; the soul that attains only so far would have

to return to the physical life for a greater experience and a higher self-development.

Poised in the principle of mind, the Spirit becomes the mental self of a mental world dwelling in the reign of a luminous mental Nature whose laws are those of the intellectual, psychic and higher emotional being dominated by the clarity and happiness of the sattwic principle proper to the mental existence. In the individual it becomes a mental soul, *manomaya purusha*, in whose nature the clarity and luminous power of the mind would rule and be able to determine entirely the forms of the body and the powers of the life ; it would not be limited by life and obstructed by matter as upon the earth. This mental soul lives in a mental or subtle body which enjoys capacities of knowledge, perception, sympathy, interpenetration with other beings, a free, delicate and extensive sense-faculty far less limited than the grosser conditions of either the life nature or the physical nature can supply. Man too has in himself concealed behind his waking consciousness and visible organism this mental soul, mental nature, mental body and a mental plane, not materialised, in which its principles are at home and not as here at strife with a world which is alien to it, obstructive to its mental freedom, corruptive of its clearness and purity. All the higher faculties of man, his intellectual and psychical being and powers, his higher emotional life awaken and increase in proportion as this mental plane in him presses upon and manifests on the physical, enriches and elevates the corresponding mental plane of the physical being and gives a greater force to the mental being which our humanity really is in the most characteristic part of its nature.

It is possible for man to awaken to this higher mental consciousness, become this mental being, put on this mental nature, live in this mental body as well as in the vital and physical sheaths. In proportion to the complete-

ness of this transformation he would become capable of a life and a being at least half divine, he would enjoy powers and a vision and perceptions beyond the scope of this ordinary life and body, govern all by the clarities of pure knowledge, be united to other beings by a sympathy of love and happiness, the emotions lifted to the perfection of the psychical plane, the sensations delivered from grossness, the intellect subtle, pure and flexible, delivered from the obstructions of matter and the impure pranic energy. He would be able to develop too the reflection of a higher knowledge and joy than the mental, receive more fully the inspirations and intuitions of the supramental being and form his perfected mental existence in their light. He could realise too the self or Spirit in a much larger, more luminous, more intimate intensity and with a greater play of its active power and bliss in the harmony of his existence.

To our ordinary notions this would seem to be indeed the perfection to which man aspires in his highest flights of idealism and it would, no doubt, be the perfection of the mental being; but it would still not be the utmost perfection of the spiritual being. For here too the spiritual realisation would be subject to the limitations of the mind which is in its nature of a diffused or an intensive rather than a comprehensive luminosity and joy. The full light, the real bliss are beyond. Therefore either the self-perfecting mental being would have to depart into the pure spirit by the shedding of its lower existence or it must return to the physical life to develop a yet higher capacity. The Upanishad expresses this truth when it says that the heavens so attained are those to which man is lifted by the rays of the sun,—by which it means the diffused, separated, though intense beams of the supramental truth-consciousness,—and from these it has to return. But those who, renouncing earth-life, go beyond through the door of the sun itself, do not return,

Ordinarily the mental being so exceeding this sphere does not return because he enters a higher range of existence peculiar to the superior hemisphere of his being, whose pure spiritual nature he cannot bring into the lower triplicity in which the mental being is the highest expression of the Self and the triple mental, vital and physical body provides usually almost the whole range of our capacity.

It is only by rising into the knowledge-self beyond the mental, by becoming the knowledge-soul, *vijnâna-maya purusha*, by putting on the nature of its infinite truth of being, by living in the knowledge-sheath of the causal body as well as in the subtle mental and the grosser vital and physical bodies that man could draw down entirely into his terrestrial existence the fullness of the infinite spiritual consciousness or raise his total being into the spiritual realm. But this is difficult in the extreme because the causal body which opens itself readily to the consciousness and capacities of the spiritual planes and belongs in its nature to the higher hemisphere of existence, is not developed in him at all or only as yet crudely developed and organised. The plane of the truth-knowledge and the plane of the infinite bliss from which it draws the stuff of its being, pertain to the higher hemisphere. They shed upon the lower existence their truth and their joy and are the source of all that we call spirituality and all that we call perfection; but it is from behind thick veils through which they come so tempered and weakened that they are entirely obscured in the materiality of the physical being, grossly distorted and perverted in the vital, perverted too though less grossly in the lowest and minimised even in the comparative purity and intensity of the highest ranges of the mental existence. Their principle is secretly lodged in all existence, even in the grossest materiality, and preserves and governs the lower worlds by their hidden power and law ; but that power

veils itself and that law works unseen through the limitations and deformations of the lesser law of our physical, vital, mental Nature. Yet their governing presence in the lowest forms assures us, because of the unity of all existence, of the possibility of their awakening and their perfect manifestation in spite of every veil and all the mass of our apparent disabilities.

The nature of these higher states of the soul and worlds of spiritual Nature are necessarily difficult to seize and even the Upanishads and the Veda only shadow them out by figures, hints and symbols. Yet it is necessary to attempt some account of their principles and practical effect so far as they can be seized by the mental being standing on the border of the two hemispheres, because the passage beyond the border is indicated to us as the completeness of the Yoga of self-transcendence by self-knowledge. The soul that aspires to perfection, ascends, says the Upanishad, from the physical Purusha into the vital, from the vital into the mental, from the mental into the knowledge-self, from the knowledge-self into the bliss-self ; this bliss-self is the foundation of the perfect Sachchidananda and to pass into it completes the ascension. We must see therefore what is meant by this transformation of the soul, this transfiguration of the Purusha.

The Eternal Wisdom

THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH

FIRMNESS^c

- 1 No compromises ; to live resolutely in integrity, plenitude and beauty.
- 2 The firmness of our resolution gives the measure of our progress and a great diligence is needed if one wishes to advance.
- 3 Circumstances, though they attack obstinately the
- 4 man who is firm, cannot destroy his proper virtue,—firmness.—Stand firm therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness.
- 5 Be firm in the accomplishment of your duties, the
- 6 great and the small.—Be ye steadfast, immovable.—
- 7 When you have seen your aim, hold to it, firm and unshakeable.
- 8 Turn not thy head from this path till thou art led to its end ; keep ever near to this door till it is opened. Let not thy eyes be shut ; seek well and thou
- 9 shalt find.—Seek wisdom carefully and she shall be uncovered to thee, and when once thou hast seen her, leave her, not.
- 10 Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.
- 11 Be thou faithful unto death.

^c 1) Goethe.— 2) Imitation of Christ.— 3) Bhartrihari.— 4) Ephesians. VI. 14.— 5) Buddhist Texts.— 6) I Corinthians XV. 58.— 7) Dhammapada.— 8) Farid-ud-din-attar.— 9) Ecclesiasticus VI. 28.— 10) Revelations III. 11.— 11) id. II. 10.

BOLDNESS^{oo}

- 1 Watch ye, stand fast, quit you like men, be strong.
 - 2 Be strong and of a good courage ; fear not.
 - 3 Lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble
 - 4 knees.—Be strong ; fear not.
 - 5-6 Man's first duty is to conquer fear.—A man's deeds are slavish, his very thoughts false, so long as he has not succeeded in putting fear under his feet.
 - 7-8 In heaven fear is not.—The sage here surpasses God. God fears nothing by the benefit of his nature ; the sage fears nothing, but by the sole strength of his spirit. This indeed is great, to have the weakness of a mortal and yet the fearlessness of a god.
 - 9 It is only the coward who appeals always to destiny
 - 10 and never to courage.—Fortune fears the brave soul ; she crushes the coward.
 - 11 He who shows not zeal where zeal should be shown, who young and strong gives himself up to indolence, who lets his will and intelligence sleep, that do-nothing, that coward shall not find the way of the perfect knowledge.
 - 12 It needs a lion-hearted man to travel the extraordinary path ; for the way is long and the sea is deep.
 - 13 There are pearls in the depths of the ocean, but one must dare all the perils of the deep to have them. So is it with the Eternal in the world.
- * *
- 14 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.
 - 15 —The more thou shalt advance, the more thy feet

^{oo} 1) I Corinthians XVI. 13.— 2) Deuteronomy XXXI. 6.—
 3) Hebrews III. 12.— 4) Isaiah XXXV. 4.— 5) Carlyle.—
 6) id.— 7) Katha-Upanishad.— 8) Seneca.— 9) Ramayana.—
 10) Seneca.— 11) Dhammapada 280.— 12) Farid-ud-din-attar.—
 13) Ramakrishna.— 14) Revelations II. 10.— 15) Book of Golden Precepts.

- shall encounter bog and morass. The path which thou walkest, is lighted by one only fire, even the light of the audacity which burns in thy heart. The more thou shalt dare, the more thou shalt obtain.—
- 16-17 Go in this thy might.—Be not afraid, only believe.
- 18 —All things are possible to him that believeth.
- 19 I will trust and not be afraid.
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16) Judges VI. 14.— 17) Mark V. 36.— 18) id. IX. 23—
19) Isaiah XII. 2

The Psychology of Social Development

XIII

If reason is an insufficient, often an inefficient, often a stumbling, always a very partially enlightened guide for humanity in that great effort which is the real heart of human progress and the inner justification of our existence as souls, minds and bodies upon the earth,—the effort not only to survive and make a place for ourselves on the earth as the animals do, not only having made to keep it and make the best vital and egoistic use of it for the efficiency and enjoyment of the individual, family or collective ego, substantially as is done by the animal families and colonies, in bee-hive or ant-hill for example, though in the larger, many-sided way of reasoning animals, but to arrive at a harmonised inner and outer perfection which we find in the end to be the discovery of the divine Reality and the complete and ideal Person within us and the shaping of human life in that image,—then neither the Hellenic ideal of an all-round philosophic, aesthetic, moral and physical culture governed by the enlightened reason of man and led by the wisest minds of a free society, nor the modern ideal of an efficient culture governed by the collective reason and organised

knowledge of mankind can be either the highest or the widest goal of social development.

The Hellenic ideal was roughly expressed in the old Latin maxim, a sound mind in a sound body ; and by a sound body the ancients meant a healthy and beautiful body well-fitted for the rational use and enjoyment of life, by a sound mind a clear and balanced reason and an enlightened and well-trained mentality,—trained in the sense of ancient, not of modern education, not packed with all available information and ideas, cast in the mould of science and so prepared for the efficient performance of social and civic needs and duties, for a professional avocation or for an intellectual pursuit, but trained in all its human capacities intellectual, moral, aesthetic to be used rightly and to range, freely, intelligently, flexibly in all questions and in all practical matters of philosophy, science, art, politics and social living. The ancient Greek mind was philosophic, aesthetic and political ; the modern mind has been scientific, economic and utilitarian. The ancient ideal laid stress on soundness and beauty and sought to build up a fine and rational human life ; the modern lays very little or no stress on beauty, but prefers soundness and useful adaptation and seeks to build up a well-ordered, well-informed and efficient human life. Both take it that man is partly a mental, partly a physical being with the mentalised physical life as his field and reason his highest attribute and his highest possibility. But if we follow to the end the new vistas opened by the most advanced tendencies of a subjective age, we shall be led back to a still more ancient truth and ideal ; we shall seize the truth that man is a developing soul which is trying to find and fulfil itself in the forms of mind, life and body ; we shall perceive before us the ideal of a self-illuminated, self-possessing, self-mastering soul in a pure and perfect mind and body. The field it seeks will be not the mentalised physical life with which

man has started, but a spiritualised life inward and outward, by which the perfected internal figures itself in a perfected external living. Beyond man's long intelligent effort towards a perfected culture and a rational society there opens the old religious and spiritual ideal, the hope of the kingdom of heaven within us and the city of God upon earth.

But if the soul is the true sovereign and if its spiritual self-finding and integral fulfilment by the power of the spirit are to be accepted as the ultimate secret of our development, then since certainly the instinctive being of man below reason is not the means of attaining that high end and since we find that reason also is an insufficient light and power, there must be a superior range of being with its own proper powers,—liberated soul-faculties, a spiritual will and knowledge higher than the reason and intelligent will,—by which alone entire conscious self-fulfilment may become possible to the human being. We must remember that our self-fulfilment is an integral unfolding of the Divine within us in the individual soul and the collective life. Otherwise we may simply come back to an old idea of individual and social life which had its greatness, but did not provide all the conditions of our perfection. That was the idea of a spiritualised typical society. It proceeded upon the supposition that each man has his own peculiar nature which is born from and reflects one element of the divine nature ; his character, ethical type, training, social occupation, spiritual possibility must be formed within the conditions of that peculiar element, the perfection we seek must be according to its law. The theory of the ancient Indian culture—its practice, as is the way of human practice, did not always correspond to the theory—worked upon this supposition. It divided man in society into the fourfold spiritual, ethical and economical order of the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra,—practically the spiritual and rational

man, the dynamic man of will, the vital, hedonistic and economic man, the material man ; the whole society represented the complete image of the creative and active Deity.

A different division of the typical society is quite possible. But whatever the arrangement or division, the typical principle is not that of the ideal human society. Even according to the Indian theory it does not belong either to the periods of man's highest or to those of his lowest possibility ; it is neither the principle of his ideal age, his age of the perfected Truth, Satyayuga, Kritayuga, in which he lives according to some high and profound realisation of his divine possibility, nor of his iron age, the Kali-Yuga, in which he collapses towards the life of the instincts, impulses and desires, with the reason serving this lower life of man. It is rather the appropriate principle of the intermediate ages of his cycle in which he attempts to maintain some imperfect form of his true law, his *dharma*, by will-power and force of character in the Treta, by law, arrangement and fixed convention in the Dwapara.* The type is not the integral man, it is the fixing and emphasizing of the generally prominent part of his active nature. But each man contains in himself the whole divine potentiality and therefore the Shudra cannot be rigidly confined within his Shudrahood, nor the Brahmin in his Brahminhood, but each contains within himself the potentialities and the need of perfection of his other elements of a divine manhood. In the Kali age these may act in a state of crude disorder, the anarchy of our being which covers our confused attempt at a new order. In the intermediate ages the principle of order may take refuge in a limited perfection, suppressing some elements to perfect others.

* Therefore it is said that Vishnu is the King in the Treta, but in the Dwapara the arranger and codifier of the knowledge and the law,

But the law of the Satya-age is the large development of the whole truth of our being in the realisation of a spontaneous and self-supported spiritual harmony. That can only be realised by the development, in the measure of which our human capacity in its enlarging cycles becomes capable of it, of the spiritual ranges of our being and their inherent light and power, knowledge and divine capacities.

We shall better understand what may be this higher being and those higher faculties, if we look again at the dealings of the reason with the trend towards the absolute in our other faculties and the principles of our complex existence, its dealings with the suprarational in them and the infrarational, the two extremes between each our intelligence is some sort of mediator. The spiritual or suprarational is always turned at its heights towards the Absolute and in its extension, living in the luminous infinite, its power is to realise the infinite in the finite, the eternal unity in all divisions and differences. Our spiritual evolution ascends therefore through the relative to the absolute, through the finite to the infinite, through all divisions to unity ; our spiritual realisation will find and seize hold on the intensities of the absolute in the relative, the large and serene presence of the infinite in the finite, the law of a perfect unity in all divisions and differences ; it will effect the great reconciliation between the secret and eternal reality and the finite appearances of the world which seek to express, but in expressing seem to deny it. Equally then our highest faculties will be those which have in them the intimate light and power and joy by which these things can be grasped in direct knowledge and experience, realised and made normally and permanently effective in will, communicated to our whole being. The infra-rational on the other hand has its origin and basis in the obscure infinite of the subconscious ; it wells up in instincts and impulses, which are really the crude and more or less haphazard intuitions of the physical, vital,

emotional and sensational mind and will in us. Its struggle is towards definition, towards finding some finite order of its obscure knowledge and tendencies, but it has also the instinct and force of the infinite from which it proceeds, it contains obscure, limited and violent velleities towards grasping the intensities of the absolute in its finite activities : but because it proceeds by ignorance and not by knowledge, it cannot succeed. The life of the reason and intelligent will stands between, takes up and enlightens the life of the instincts and impulses and helps it to find on a higher plane the finite order for which it gropes. On the other side it looks up and out towards the absolute, infinite and one without being able to grasp its realities ; it is able only to consider them with a sort of derivative and remote understanding, because itself moving in the relative, limited and definite it can act only by definition, division and limitation. These three powers of being, the suprarational, rational and infra-rational are present, but with an infinitely varying prominence in all our activities.

The limitations of the reason become very strikingly, very characteristically, nakedly apparent when it is confronted with that great order of psychological truths and experiences which we have hitherto kept in the background—the religious being of man and his religious life. Here is a realm at which the intellectual reason gazes with the bewildered eyes of a foreigner who hears a language of which the words and the spirit are unintelligible to him and sees everywhere forms of life and principles of thought and action which are absolutely strange to his experience. He may try to learn this speech and understand this strange and alien life, but it is with pain and difficulty, and he cannot succeed unless he has, so to speak, unlearned himself and become one in spirit and nature with the natives of this celestial empire. Till then his efforts to understand and interpret them in his own language and according to his own notions end at the

worst in a gross misunderstanding and deformation ; they sound to men of religious experience like the prattle of a child who is trying to shape into the mould of his own habitual notions the life of adults or the blunders of an ignorant mind which thinks fit to criticise patronisingly or adversely the labours of the profound thinker or the great scientist. At the best even they extract and account for only the externals of the things they attempt to explain ; the spirit is missed, the inner matter is left out and for that reason even the account of the externals is without real truth and has only an apparent correctness.

The unaided reason in face of what it calls the phenomena of the religious life, is naturally apt to adopt one of two attitudes, both of them shallow in the extreme, presumptuous and erroneous. Either it views the whole thing as a mass of superstition, a mystical nonsense, a farrago of ignorant barbaric survivals,—that was the extreme spirit of the rationalist now happily, though not dead, yet moribund,—or it patronises religion, tries to explain its origins, gently or forcefully to correct its superstitions, crudities, absurdities and purify it or persuade it to purify itself ; it allows it a role, leaves it perhaps for the edification of the ignorant, admits its value as a moralising influence or its utility to the State for keeping the lower classes in order, even perhaps tries to invent that strange chimera, a rational religion.

The former attitude has on its positive side played a powerful part in the history of human thought, has even been of a considerable utility in its own way,—we shall have to note briefly hereafter how and why,—to human progress and in the end to religion itself ; but its negation is an arrogant falsity, as the human mind has now sufficiently begun to perceive. Its mistake is like that of the foreigner who thinks everything in an alien country absurd and inferior because these things are not his ways of acting and thinking and cannot be cut out by his

measures or suited to his standards. So the thoroughgoing rationalist asks the religious spirit, if it is to stand, to satisfy the material reason and even to give physical proof of its truths, while the very essence of religion is the discovery of the immaterial Spirit and the play of a supra-physical consciousness. So too he tries to judge religion by his idea of its externalities, just as an obstreperous foreigner might try to judge a civilisation by the dress, outward colour of life and some of the most external peculiarities in the social manners of the inhabitants; that in this he errs in company with certain of the so-called religious themselves, may be his excuse, but cannot be the justification of his ignorance. The more moderate attitude of the rational mind has also played its part in the history of human thought. Its attempts to explain religion have resulted in the compilation of an immense mass of amazingly ingenious perversions, such as certain pseudo-scientific attempts to form a comparative Science of Religion, which have built up in the approved style immense façades of theory with stray bricks of misunderstood facts for their material. Its mild condonations of religion have led to superficial phases of thought which have passed quickly away. Its efforts at the creation of a rational religion, perfectly well-intentioned, but helpless and unconvincing, have had no appreciable effect and have failed like a dispersing cloud, *chhinnâbhra iva nashyati*.

The essence of religion, apart from its outward machinery of creed, cult, ceremony and symbol, is the search for and the finding of God, the infinite, absolute, one, divine who is all these things and yet no abstraction but a Being, and the living out of the relations between man and God, relations of unity, relations of difference, relations of an illuminated knowledge, an ecstatic love and delight, an absolute surrender and service, a casting of every part of our existence out of its normal

status into an uprush of man towards the Divine which brings a descent of the Divine into man. All this has nothing to do with the realm of reason or its normal activities ; its aim, its sphere, its process is suprarational. The knowledge of God is not to be gained by weighing the feeble arguments of reason for or against his existence : it is to be gained only by a self-transcending and absolute consecration, aspiration and experience. Nor does that experience proceed by anything like rational scientific experiment or rational philosophic thinking. Even in those parts of religious discipline which seem most to resemble scientific experiment, the method is a verification of things which exceed the reason and its timid scope; and even in those parts of religious knowledge which seem most to resemble intellectual operations, the illuminating faculties are not imagination, logic and rational judgment, but revelations, inspirations, intuitions; intuitive discernments which come from a plane of suprarational light. The love of God is an infinite and absolute feeling which does not admit of any rational limitation and does not use a language of rational worship and adoration ; the delight in God is that peace and bliss which passes all understanding. The surrender to God is the surrender of the whole being to a suprarational light, will, power and love and his service takes no account of the compromises with life which the practical reason of man uses as the best part of its method in the ordinary conduct of mundane existence. Wherever religion really finds itself, —there is plenty of that sort of religious practice which is halting, imperfect, half-sincere, only half-sure of itself and in which reason can get in a word,—its way is absolute and its fruits are ineffable.

Reason has indeed a part to play in relation to this highest field of our religious being and experience, but that part is quite secondary. It cannot lay down the law for the religious life, it cannot determine in its own right

the system of divine knowledge; it cannot school and lesson the divine love and delight; it cannot set bounds to spiritual experience or lay its yoke upon the action of the spiritual man. Its sole part is to explain as best it can in its own language to the intellectual part of man the truths, the experiences, the laws of our supra-rational and spiritual existence; that has been the work of religious philosophy in the East and of theology in the West, a work of great importance at moments like the present when the intellect of mankind after a long wandering is again turning towards the search for the Divine. Here there must inevitably enter a part of those operations proper to the intellect, logical reasoning, inferences from the data given by rational experience and knowledge of the apparent facts of existence, appeals even to the physical truths of science and all the apparatus of the intelligent mind in its ordinary workings. But this is the weakest part of religious philosophy. It does not convince the rational mind unless it is predisposed to belief, or even if it convinces, it certainly cannot give it the knowledge. Reason is safest when it is content with taking the truths and experiences of the spiritual being and the spiritual life, just as they are given to it, and throwing them into such form, order and language as will make them the most intelligible to the reasoning mind. Even then it is not quite safe, for it is apt to harden the order into an intellectual system, to present the form as if it were the essence and, at best, it has to use a language which is not the tongue of the supra-rational truth itself, but its translation and, not being either the ordinary tongue of the rational intelligence, is open to non-understanding or misunderstanding by the ordinary reason of mankind. It is well-known to the experience of the spiritual seeker that religious philosophy cannot give the knowledge; all it can do, is to address the intellect and when it has done, to say, "I have tried to give you the truth in

a form and system which will make it intelligible and possible to you ; if you are intellectually convinced or attracted, you must now seek the real knowledge by other means which are beyond my province."

But there is another level of the religious life in which reason might seem justified in interfering more independently. For as there is the supra-rational life in which religious aspiration finds entirely what it seeks, so there is also the infrarational life of the instincts, impulses, sensations, crude emotions, vital activities from which all human aspiration takes its beginning. These too feel the touch of the religious sense in man, share its needs and experience, desire its satisfactions. Religion includes this satisfaction also in its scope, and in what is usually called religion, it seems even to be the greater part, sometimes even to an external view almost the whole ; for the supreme purity of spiritual experience does not appear or is glimpsed only through this mixed and turbid current. Much impurity, ignorance, superstition, many doubtful elements must form as the result of this contact and union of our highest tendencies with our lower ignorant being. Here it would seem that reason has its legitimate part, that of enlightening, purifying, rationalising the play of the instincts and impulses. It would seem that a religious reformation substituting a "pure" and rational religion for one of that is largely infrarational and impure, would be a distinct advance in the religious development of humanity. To a certain extent this is so, but, owing to the peculiar nature of the religious being, its entire urge towards the supra-rational, not without serious qualifications.

There are religious forms and systems which become effete and corrupt and have to be destroyed, others which lose much of their inner sense and become clouded in knowledge and injurious in practice ; in destroying these or in negating their aberrations reason has

played an important part in religious history. But in getting rid of the superstition and ignorance which have attached themselves to religious forms and symbols reason tends to deny and, so far as it can, to destroy the truth and the experience which was contained in them. Reformations which give too much to reason and are too negative and protestant, usually create religions which lack in wealth of spirituality and fullness of religious emotion; they are not opulent in their contents; their form and too often their spirit is impoverished, bare and cold. Nor are they really rational; for they live not by their reason, which to the rational mind is as irrational as that of the creeds they replace, still less by their negations, but by their positive quantum of faith and fervour which is supra-rational in its whole aim and has too its infrarational elements. If these seem less gross to the ordinary mind, it is often because they are more timid in venturing into the realm of suprarational experience. The life of the instincts and impulses on its religious side cannot be satisfyingly purified by reason, but rather by being sublimated, by being lifted up into the illuminations of the spirit. The natural line of religious development proceeds always by illumination; and religious reformation acts best either by reilluminating instead of destroying old forms or, when destruction is necessary, by replacing them with richer and not poorer forms, purified by suprarational illumination, not by rational enlightenment. A purely rational religion could only be a cold and bare Deism, and such attempts have always failed to achieve vitality and permanence; for they act contrary to the *dharma*, the natural law and spirit of religion. If reason is to play any part, it must be an intuitive rather than an intellectual reason, touched always by spiritual intensity and insight.

For the relations of the spirit and the reason need not be, as they too often are in our practice, hostile or with-

out any point of contact. Religion itself need not adopt for its principle the formula "I believe because it is impossible" or Pascal's "I believe because it is absurd." What is impossible or absurd to the unaided reason, becomes real and right to the reason lifted beyond itself by the power of the spirit and irradiated by its light. For then it is dominated by the intuitive mind which is our means of passage to a yet higher principle of knowledge. The widest spirituality does not exclude or discourage any essential human activity or faculty, but lifts them all up out of their imperfection and groping ignorance and makes them the instruments of the light, power and joy of the divine being.

Hymns of the Atris

THE EIGHTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

THE HOLDERS OF THE LUMINOUS WORLDS

The Rishi invokes Mitra and Varuna as the upholders of the worlds or planes of being, especially the three luminous worlds in which the triple mental, the triple vital, the triple physical find the light of their truth and the divine law of their powers. The strength of the Aryan warrior is increased by them and guarded in that imperishable law. From the luminous worlds the rivers of the truth descend with their yield of bliss. In each of them a luminous Purusha fertilises a form of the triple thought-consciousness of the Truth ; these, which make the luminous day of the soul, found in man the divine and infinite consciousness and in that the divine peace and the activity by which in the extended universality of our being there is the rich felicity and the creation of the godhead. The divine workings are impaired and restricted by the gods in the ordinary life of the vital and the physical being, but when Mitra and Varuna uphold in us the luminous worlds in which each of these finds its truth and power, they become complete and firm for ever.]

1. Three worlds of the Light you two uphold,
O Varuna, three heavens, three mid-worlds, O Mitra,
and you increase the might of the Warrior and guard

him in the imperishable law of your working.

2. Your fostering cows ¹ have their streams, O Varuna, O Mitra, the rivers milk out their honeyed yield. There stand wide three luminous Bulls ² and cast their seed into the three Thoughts.

3. In the dawn I call to the divine Mother infinite, in the mid-day and at the rising of the sun. I desire of Mitra and Varuna the peace and the movement in the forming of the all ³ for felicity and for the creation and the begetting.⁴

4. Because you are the upholders of the luminous sphere of the mid-world and the luminous sphere of the earth, O divine Sons of Infinity, O Mitra and Varuna, the immortal gods impair not your workings which are firm for ever.⁶

1. *Dhenavah*, the rivers of the Truth, as *gāvah*, the luminous cows, are the rays of its light. 2. The Bull is the Purusha, soul or conscious being; the Cow is the Prakriti, the power of consciousness. The creation of the godhead, the Son, comes by the fertilising of the triple luminous consciousness by the triple luminous soul of the Truth-being so that that higher consciousness becomes active, creative and fruitful in man. 3. The action of the sacrifice consists in the formation or "extension" of the universal being, *sarvatāti*, and of the divine being, *devatāti*. 4. Of the Son, the godhead created within the humanity. 6. That is, in the ordinary workings of the life-plane and the material plane, because they are unilluminated, full of ignorance and defect, the law of our divine and infinite being is impaired or spoiled, works under restrictions and with perversions; it manifests fully, steadfastly and faultlessly only when the ideal, supramental truth-plane is upheld in us by the pure wideness and harmony of Varuna and Mitra and takes up the vital and the physical consciousness into its power and light.

THE NINTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

THE INCREASERS OF BEING AND DELIVERERS

[The Rishi desires the wide and multiple fostering of our being and its powers which Varuna and Mitra give and their complete impulsion of our strength towards the perfect foundation of the divine status. He prays to them to protect and deliver him from the Destroyers and prevent their adverse control from impairing the growth of the godhead in our various sheaths or bodies.]

1. Multiple indeed by the wideness 1 is now your fostering of our being, O Varuna. O Mitra, I would enjoy your perfect-mindedness.

2. You are they who betray not to harm; 2 may we enjoy your complete force of impulsion for our founding; may we be they, O you violent godheads.

3. Protect us, O violent ones, 3 with your protectings and deliver us with a perfect deliverance. May we in our embodyings break through the Destroyers.

4. O transcendent in will-power, let us not in our embodyings suffer the control of any, 4 nor in our begetting, nor our creation.

1. The wideness of the infinite Truth-plane with the manifold wealth of its spiritual contents. Its condition is the perfection of the thought-mind and psychic mentality proper to a divine nature, which comes to man as the grace of the gods, *sumati*. 2. The harms of the Dasyus, destroyers of our being and enemies of its divine progress, the sons of Limitation and Ignorance. 3. Rudras. Rudra is the Divine as the master of our evolution by violence and battle, smiting and destroying the Sons of Darkness and the evil they create in man. Varuna and Mitra as helpers in the upward struggle against the Dasyus assume this Rudrahood. 4. That is, any of the Destroyers.

THE TENTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

AN INVOCATION TO THE SACRIFICE

[The Rishi invokes Mitra and Varuna to the Soma offering as destroyers of the enemy and greateners of our being and as helpers of our thoughts by their mastery and wisdom.]

1. O destroyers of the Enemy, come with your greatenings,¹ O Varuna, O Mitra, to this our delightful sacrifice.

2. O Varuna, O Mitra. you govern every man and are the wise thinkers ; you are the rulers, nourish our thoughts.

3. Come, O Varuna. O Mitra, to our Soma offering, to the sacrifice of the giver, that you may drink of this wine.

1. By destroying the enemy, the hurters, who pervert and diminish our being, will and knowledge, they increase in us the largenesses proper to the "vast Truth." When they govern, the control of the Dasyus is removed and the knowledge of the Truth increases in our thoughts.

THE ELEVENTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

AN INVOCATION TO THE SACRIFICE

[The Rishi invokes Mitra and Varuna to the sacrifice as the godheads who lead man on the path according to the law of the truth and confirm our spiritual gains by its workings.]

1. With the words we sacrifice to Mitra and to Varuna as the Atri.

Sit on the seat of the largeness for the drinking of the wine.

2. By your working you keep firm the gettings of good and you make men to walk the path by your law.

Sit on the seat of the largeness for the drinking of the wine.

3. May Mitra and Varuna take delight in our sacrifice that we may have our desire.

Sit on the seat of the largeness for the drinking of the wine. .

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXIV

In the process of centralisation of all the powers of an organised community in a sovereign governing body which has been the prominent feature of national formations, the largest overt part has been played by military necessity. This military necessity was both external and internal. The external, the defence of the nation against disruption or subjection from without, is strongest, but the defence against internal disruption and disorder is also an imperative necessity. To bind together the constituent parts of a nation forming or already formed, a common administrative authority is essential, and this was the part played by the monarchy ; but the first need and claim of the central authority is to be able to prevent dissidence, strife and the weakening or breaking up of the organic formation. The monarchy or other central body may effect this end partly by moral force and psychological suggestion ; it stands as the symbol of union and imposes respect for their visible and consecrated unity on the constituent parts, however strong may be their local, racial, clan or class instincts of separatism ; it represents the united authority of the nation imposing its moral force as greater than the moral right of the separate parts, even if they be something like sub-nations, and commanding their obedience. But in the last resort, since these motives



may at any moment fail when revolting interests or sentiments are strong and passions run high, the governing body must have always the greatest military force at its command so as to overawe them and prevent the outbreak of a disruptive civil war. Or if the civil war or rebellion comes about,—as is likely to happen especially if the monarchy or the governing body is identified closely with one of the parties in a quarrel, as in the American war of secession, or is itself the subject of attack,—then it must have so great a predominance of force behind it as to be morally sure of victory in the conflict. This can only be secured to the best possible perfection,—it cannot be done absolutely except by an effective disarmament,—if the whole military authority is centred in and the whole actual or potential military force of the society subjected to the central body.

In the trend to the formation of the world-State, however vague and formless it may yet be, we see that the same large part is being played by the element of military necessity. The peoples of the world already possess a loose and chaotic unity of life in which none can any longer lead an isolated, independent and self-dependent existence, but each feels in its culture, political tendencies, economical existence the influence and repercussion of events and movements in other parts of the world ; each feels subtly or directly its separate life overshadowed by the life of the whole. Science, international commerce and the political and cultural penetration of Asia and Africa by the dominant West have been the agents of this great change. Even in this loose unity the occurrence or the possibility of great wars has become a powerful element of disturbance to the whole fabric. Even before the European war, the necessity of avoiding or minimising any such disturbance was keenly felt and various well-intentioned, but feeble and blundering devices were being tentatively introduced which had that

end in view. Had any of these makeshifts been tolerably effective, the world might long have remained content with its present conditions and the pressing need of a closer international organisation would not have enforced itself on the general mind of the race. But the European collision has rendered the indefinite continuance of the old chaotic regime impossible. The necessity of avoiding any repetition of the catastrophe is universally acknowledged. A means of keeping international peace, of creating an authority which shall have the power to dispose of dangerous international questions and preventing what from the new point of view of human unity we may call civil war between the peoples of mankind, has somehow or other to be found or created.

Various ideas have been put forward with more or less authority as to the necessary conditions of international peace. The crudest of these is that which supposes the destruction of German militarism to be the one thing needful and sufficient to secure the future peace of the world. The military power, the political and commercial ambitions of Germany and her sense of being thwarted by her confined geographical position and her encirclement by an unfriendly alliance were, no doubt, the immediate moral cause of this particular war ; but the real cause lay in the very nature of the international situation and the psychology of national life. The chief feature of that psychology is the predominance and worship of national egoism under the sacred name of patriotism. Every national ego, like every organic life, desires naturally a double self-fulfilment, intensive and extensive or expansive, a deepening and enriching of its culture, political strength, economical well-being within and, without, an extension or expansion of its culture, its political extent, dominion, power or influence and its commercial exploitation of the world. To a certain extent only this natural and instinctive desire, which is not an abnormal moral

depravity, but the very instinct of egoistic life,—and what life at present is not egoistic?—can be satisfied by peaceful means. But where it feels itself hemmed in by obstacles that it thinks it can overcome, opposed by barriers, encircled, dissatisfied with a share of possession and domination it considers disproportionate to its needs and its strength, or where new possibilities of expansion open out to it in which only its strength can obtain for it its desirable portion, it is at once moved to the use of some kind of force and can only be restrained by the amount of resistance it is likely to meet. If it has only a weak opposition of unorganised or ill-organised peoples to overcome, it will not hesitate; if it has the opposition of powerful rivals to fear, it will pause, seek for alliances, watch for its moment. Germany had not the monopoly of this expansive instinct of egoism; only its egoism was the best organised and least satisfied, the youngest, crudest, hungriest, most self-confident and presumptuous, most satisfied with the self-righteous brutality of its desires. The breaking of German militarism may ease the situation, but it will not cure it. So long as any kind of militarism remains, so long as fields of expansion remain, so long as national egoisms remain and there is no final check on their inherent instinct of expansion, war will be always a possibility and almost a necessity.

Another idea put forward with great authorities behind it is a league of free and democratic nations to keep the peace, by the use of force if needs be. If less crude, this solution is not for that any the more satisfactory. It is an old idea, the idea Metternich put in practice after the overthrow of Napoleon; only in place of a dynastic Holy Alliance of monarchs to maintain peace and monarchical order and keep down democracy, it is proposed to have a league of free—and imperial—peoples to maintain peace and enforce democracy. One thing alone is perfectly sure that the new league would go the way of the old;

it would break up as soon as the interests and ambitions of the constituent powers became sufficiently disunited or a new situation arose such as was created by the violent resurgence of oppressed democracy in 1848, such as would be created by the inevitable future struggle between the young Titan, Socialism, and the old Olympian gods of a bourgeois world ; we see indeed the struggle already obscurely outlining itself in revolutionary Russia and it cannot be very long delayed throughout Europe, for the war which has momentarily suspended, may very well turn out to have really precipitated its advent and accentuated its force. By one cause or the other or by both in union dissolution would be certain. No league can be permanent in its nature ; the ideas which supported it, change ; the interests which made it possible and effective, become fatally modified or obsolete.

The supposition is that democracies will be less ready to go to war than monarchies ; but this is only true within a certain measure. What are now called democracies, are bourgeois States in the form either of a constitutional monarchy or a middle-class republic. In each of them the middle class has taken over with certain modifications the diplomatic habits, foreign policies and other international ideas of the monarchical or aristocratic governments which preceded them. This seems to have been a natural law of their mentality. For we see in Germany, not yet a democracy, that it is the aristocratic and the capitalist class combined who constitute the Pan-German party with its exaggerated and almost insane ambitions. In the new Russia the bourgeoisie have rejected the political ideas of the Czardom in internal affairs and helped to overturn autocracy, but they preserve its ideas in external affairs minus the German influence and stand for the expansion of Russia and the possession of Constantinople. Certainly, there is an important difference. In the first place, the monarchical or aristocratic State is political in its menta-

lity and seeks first of all territorial aggrandisement and political predominance or hegemony among the nations, commercial aims are with it only a secondary preoccupation ; with the bourgeois State the order is reversed, it has its eye partly on political aggrandisement, but chiefly on the possession of markets, the command of new fields of wealth, the formation or conquest of colonies or dependencies which can be commercially and industrially exploited. In the second place, the monarchical or aristocratic statesman turns to war as almost his first expedient, as soon as he is dissatisfied with the response to his diplomacy ; the bourgeois statesman hesitates, calculates, gives a longer rope to diplomacy, tries to gain his ends by bargainings, arrangements, peaceful pressure, demonstrations of power and resorts to war only when these expedients have failed him and only if the end seems commensurate with the means and the great speculation of war promises a very strong chance of success. On the other hand the bourgeois democratic state has developed a stupendous military organisation of which the most powerful monarchs and aristocracies could not dream ; and if this tends to delay the outbreak of large wars, it tends too to make their final advent sure and their proportions great.

There is indeed the suggestion that a more truly democratic and therefore a more peaceful spirit and more thoroughly democratic institutions will reign after the war by the triumph of the liberal nations and that, in addition, one rule of the new international situation will be the right of nations to dispose of their own destinies and be governed only by their free consent. The latter condition is impossible of immediate fulfilment except in Europe, and even for Europe the principle is not really recognised in its totality. If it were capable of universal application, if the existing relations of peoples and the psychology of nations could be so altered as to establish it as a working principle, one of the most fertile causes of war and revo-

lution would disappear, but all causes would not be removed. Nor does the greater democratisation of the European peoples afford a sure guarantee. Certainly, democracy of a certain kind, democracy reposing for its natural constitution on individual liberty would be likely to be indisposed to war except in moments of great and universal excitement. War demands a violent concentration of all the forces, a spirit of submission, a suspension of free-will, free action and of the right of criticism which is alien to the true instincts of democracy. But the democracies of the future are likely to be strongly concentrated governments in which the principle of liberty is subordinated to the efficient life of the community by some form of State socialism. Such a democratic State might well have even a greater power for war, might be able to put forward a more violently concentrated military organisation in event of hostilities than even the present bourgeois democracies, and it is not certain that it would be less tempted to use them. At present Socialism is pacific in its tendencies, largely because the necessity of preparation for war is favourable to the rule of the upper classes and war itself used in the interest of the governments and the capitalists, while the ideas and classes it represents are at present depressed and do not grow by the uses or share visibly in the profits of war. What will happen when they have hold of the government and its temptations and opportunities, remains to be seen. The possession of power is the great test of all idealisms, and as yet there have been none religious or secular which have withstood it or escaped diminution and corruption.

To rely upon the common consent of conflicting national egoisms for the preservation of peace between the nations is to rely upon a logical contradiction and a practical improbability which, if we can judge by reason and experience, amounts to an impossibility. A League of Peace can only prevent armed strife for a time. A

system of enforced arbitration even with the threat of a large armed combination against the offender may minimise the chance of war, may absolutely forbid it to the smaller or weaker nations ; but a great nation which sees a chance of making itself the centre of a strong combination of peoples interested in upsetting the settled order of things for their own benefit, might always choose to take the risks of the adventure in the hope of snatching advantages which in its estimation outweighed the risks. Moreover, in times of great upheaval and movement when large ideas, enormous interests and inflamed passions divide the peoples of the world, the whole system would be likely to break down ; the very elements of its efficacy would cease to exist. Any such tentative and imperfect device would be bound before long to disclose its inefficacy and either the attempt at a deliberate organisation of international life would have to be abandoned and the work left to be wrought out confusedly by the force of events, or else the creation of a real, effective and powerful authority must be attempted which would stand for the general sense and the general power of mankind in its collective life and spirit and be something more than a bundle of vigorously separate States loosely tied together by the frail bond of a violable moral agreement. Whether such an authority can really be created by agreement, whether it must not rather create itself partly by the growth of ideas, but still more by the shock of forces, is a question to which only the future can reply.

Such an authority would have to command the psychological assent of mankind and exercise a moral force upon the nations greater than that of their own national authority and commanding more readily their obedience under all normal circumstances. It would have to be a symbol of human unity and make itself constantly serviceable to the world by assuring the effective maintenance and development of large common interests

which would outweigh all separate national interests and satisfactions even in the estimation of the separate nations themselves. It must help more and more to fix the growing sense of a common humanity and a common life of mankind in which the sharp divisions which separate country from country, race from race, colour from colour, continent from continent would gradually lose their force and undergo a progressive effacement. Given these conditions, it would develop a moral authority which would enable it to pursue with less and less opposition and friction the unification of mankind. The nature of the psychological assent it secured from the beginning would depend largely on its constitution and character and would in its turn determine both the nature and power of the moral authority it exercised. If its constitution and character were such as to conciliate the sentiment and interest in its maintenance the active support of all or most of the different sections of mankind or at least those whose sentiment and support counted powerfully and to represent the leading political, social, cultural ideas and interests of the time, it would have the maximum of psychological assent and moral authority and its way would be comparatively smooth. If defective in these respects, it would have to make up the deficiency by a greater concentration and show of military force at its back and by extraordinary and striking services to the general life, culture and development of the human race such as assured for the Roman imperial authority the long and general assent of the Mediterranean and Western peoples to the subjection and obliteration of their national existence.

But in either case the possession and concentration of military power would be for long the first condition of its security, and this possession would have to be, as soon as possible, a sole possession. It is difficult at present to foresee the consent of the nations of the world to their

own disarmament. For so long as strong national egoisms of any kind remained and along with them mutual distrust, the nations would not sacrifice their possession of an armed force on which they could rely for self-defence if their interests, or at least those that they considered essential to their existence and prosperity, came to be threatened. Any distrust of the assured impartiality of the international government would operate in the same direction. Yet such a disarmament would be essential to the assured cessation of war—in the absence of some great and radical psychological and moral change in humanity. So long as national armies exist the possibility of war will exist. With their continued existence, however small in times of peace, an international authority even with a military force of its own behind it, would be in the position of the feudal king never quite sure of his effective control over his vassals. The international authority would have to hold under its command the sole trained military force in the world for the policing of the nations and also,—otherwise the monopoly would be ineffective,—the sole disposal of the means of manufacturing arms and implements of war; national and private munition factories and arms factories would have to disappear.

Such a consummation would mark definitely the creation of a world-State in place of the present international conditions; for it could not really be done unless the international authority became not merely the arbiter of disputes, but the source of law and the final power behind their execution. For that execution against recalcitrant countries or classes, for the prevention of all kinds of strife not merely political, but commercial, industrial and others or of their decision by other than the way of law and arbitration, for the suppression of any attempt at violent change and revolution the world-State, even at its strongest, would still need the concentration of all force in its own hands. So long as man remains what he is force,

in spite of all idealisms and generous pacific hopes, must remain the ultimate arbiter and governor of his life and its possessor the real ruler. It may veil its crude presence at ordinary times and take only mild and civilised forms,—mild in comparison, for are not the jail and the executioner still the two great pillars of the social order?—but it is there silently upholding the specious appearances of our civilisation and ready to intervene, whenever called upon, in the workings of the fairer but still feebler gods of the social cosmos. Diffused, force fulfils the free workings of Nature and is the servant of life but also of discord and struggle; concentrated, it becomes the guarantee of organisation and the bond of order.

Thoughts and Glimpses

Wherever thou seest a great end, be sure of a great beginning. Where a monstrous and painful destruction appals thy mind, console it with the certainty of a large and great creation. God is there not only in the still small voice, but in the fire and in the whirlwind.

The greater the destruction, the freer the chances of creation ; but the destruction is often long, slow and oppressive, the creation tardy in its coming or interrupted in its triumph. The night returns again and again and the day lingers or seems even to have been a false dawning. Despair not therefore, but watch and work. Those who hope violently, despair swiftly : neither hope nor fear, but be sure of God's purpose and thy will to accomplish.

The hand of the divine Artist works often as if it were unsure of its genius and its material. It seems to touch and test and leave, to pick up and throw away and pick up again, to labour and fail and botch and repiece together. Surprises and disappointments are the order of his work before all things are ready. What was selected, is cast away into the abyss of reprobation ; what was rejected, becomes the corner-stone of a mighty edifice. But behind all this is the sure eye of a knowledge which surpasses our reason and the slow smile of an infinite ability.

God has all time before him and does not need to be always in a hurry. He is sure of his aim and success and cares not if he break his work a hundred times to bring

it nearer perfection. Patience is our first great necessary lesson, but not the dull slowness to move of the timid, the sceptical, the weary, the slothful, the unambitious or the weakling ; a patience full of a calm and gathering strength which watches and prepares itself for the hour of swift great strokes, few but enough to change destiny.

Wherefore God hammers so fiercely at his world, tramples and kneads it like dough, casts it so often into the blood-bath and the red hell-heat of the furnace ? Because humanity in the mass is still a hard, crude and vile ore which will not otherwise be smelted and shaped : as is his material, so is his method. Let it help to transmute itself into nobler and purer metal, his ways with it will be gentler and sweeter, much loftier and fairer its uses.

Wherefore he selected or made such a material, when he had all infinite possibility to choose from ? Because of his divine Idea which saw before it not only beauty and sweetness and purity, but also force and will and greatness. Despise not force, nor hate it for the ugliness of some of its faces, nor think that love only is God. All perfect perfection must have something in it of the stuff of the hero and even of the Titan. But the greatest force is born out of the greatest difficulty.



All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised ; but his nature mental and physical is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfections.

The Spirit is the truth of our being ; mind and body in their imperfection are its masks, but in their perfection should be its moulds. To be spiritual only is not enough ; that prepares a number of souls for heaven, but leaves the earth very much where it was. Neither is a compromise the way of salvation.

The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are

infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings.

If the triple change could coincide in a perfect correspondence, a faultless work would be done ; but the mind and body of mankind cannot hold perfectly a strong spiritual inrush : most is spilt, much of the rest is corrupted. Many intellectual and physical upturnings of our soil are needed to work out a little result from a large spiritual sowing.

Each religion has helped mankind. Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at a many-sided perfection ; Christianity gave him some vision of divine love and charity ; Buddhism has shown him a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer, Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God ; Hinduism has opened to him the largest and profoundest spiritual possibilities. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other ; but intellectual dogma and cult egoism stand in the way.

All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet has been able to spiritualise mankind. For that there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual self-evolution.

The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention : the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of the others cannot be understood and till then all interpretation of present happening and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XXXVII

FROM THE UNDIVINE TO THE DIVINE

But still in what sense have we to take this distinction of a divine life as opposed to an undivine, and should we not rather speak of an ascent from level to higher level of a divine manifestation ? Essentially, no doubt, such ascent is the nature of the change, the evolution we undergo and so the impartial eye of a universal vision participating in the untrammelled being, consciousness and delight of Sachchidananda would see and judge it. Still, not from the essential, but from the practical and relative point of view the distinction between the divine and the undivine has a real value and truth and is even the one great truth with which the evolution is eventually concerned. To pass over the line which divides the double status and dwell in that to which we at present only aspire, is the critical and decisive step towards which all the great and manifold effort of the evolution is labouring in the series of its definitive stages and its irretraceable revolutions as in its cycles of tentative advance and recoil.

The distinction, when we go to its fundamental realities, rests upon two different principles of status ; one is

the basis of a perpetual bondage to imperfection, the other the ground from which freedom and perfection naturally flower and can grow progressively towards their highest stature and their most fertile richness. Ordinarily, when we make the distinction, we, as human beings struggling under the pressure of life and among the difficulties of our conduct amidst the problems and perplexities of life, think most of the distinction we have to make between good and evil or of that and its kindred problem of happiness and suffering. When we seek intellectually for a divine presence in things, a divine origin of the world, a divine government of its workings, the presence of evil, the presence of suffering and the large, the enormous part, played by pain, grief and affliction in the economy of Nature are the cruel phenomena which baffle our reason and stagger the instinctive faith of mankind in an all-seeing, all-determining and omnipresent Divinity. Other difficulties we could make shift to solve more easily and happily and be better satisfied with the ready conclusiveness of our solutions. But evil and suffering are only a striking aspect, not the root of the matter. Besides the deficiency or fall from good in the world and besides the failure to achieve happiness and overcome suffering, the fall from Delight, there is the deficiency or fall from other divine degrees, Knowledge, Truth, Beauty, Power, Unity; all these in their absolute are elements of the Divine not less than absolute Good and absolute Delight.

Therefore the undivine consists not radically in moral evil or sensational suffering,—they are only two strong results of a common principle,—but in a general principle of imperfection. But when we look closely at this imperfection and study it, we see that it consists in limitation and a various, many-branching distortion, perversion, fall from an ideal Truth of being which we can conceive but fail to achieve; it is a lapse from an ideal consciousness and knowledge, delight, love and

beauty, power and conscious capacity, harmony and good. Again, when we look and study the cause of the fall, we see that all this proceeds from the primal fact that our being, consciousness, force, experience represent a principle of division in the unity of the divine being, which becomes in its inevitable practical effect a limitation of the divine consciousness and knowledge, the divine delight and beauty, the divine power and capacity, the divine harmony and good.

When we say that all is a divine manifestation, even that which we call undivine, we may mean, first, that in its essentiality all is divine or, to put it in a form which appeals more to our psychological sense of the universe, that in all things there is a presence, a primal Reality, called by us variously Self, God or Brahman, which is ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite, its infinity not affected by the limitations of relative things, its purity by sin and evil, its bliss by pain and suffering, its perfection by our defects of consciousness, knowledge, will, unity. So the Upanishad describes the divine Purusha as the one Fire which has entered into all forms and shapes itself according to the form, the one Sun which illumines all impartially, but is not affected by the faults of our seeing. But this perception is not enough, since it leaves the problem unsolved why that which is ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite in itself should be in its manifestation so full of impurity, imperfection, suffering and limitation.

If we simply leave these two dissonant facts of existence standing, we are driven either to say that there is no reconciliation possible,—and then all we can do is to cling as much as we can to a deepening sense of the joy of the pure and essential Presence and do the best we can with the discordant externality,—or to say that the former alone is a Truth and the latter is only a falsehood or illusion created by a mysterious principle of Ignorance,—and then we have to find some way of escape

out of the falsehood of the manifest world into the truth of the hidden Reality. Or else we may say with the Buddhist that there is no need of explanation, since there is this one practical fact of the imperfection and impermanence of things and no Self, God or Brahman,—for that too is an illusion of our consciousness,—and all that is needed is to get rid of the persistent ideas and persistent energy which maintain the continuity of the impermanence. So we achieve self-extinction in Nirvana and extinguish the problem of things by our self-extinction. It is true that by excluding the discordant manifestation or insisting only on the pure and perfect Presence, we may achieve individually a deep and blissful sense of this silent Divinity and in the end an exclusive consciousness of it, and by immersion in it lose and so escape from the discordances of the manifestation. But our whole consciousness, our universal seeking for the Divine, for its full consciousness and delight and power of existence and therefore our whole being, knowledge-tendency and will are not satisfied. So long as the world is not divinely explained to us, God remains unexplained and imperfectly known, and so long as the world is not present to our consciousness and possessed by its powers in the sense of the divine being, we are not in possession of the whole Divinity.

On the other hand, if we try, admitting always the essential Presence, to justify also the divinity of the manifestation in which we live, we may say, secondly, that not only is the Spirit in things absolutely perfect and divine, but each thing also is relatively perfect and divine in itself, in the relation of its phenomena to the law of its being and in its proper place in the complete manifestation. Each thing is divine in itself because each is a fact and idea of the divine being, knowledge and will fulfilling itself infallibly in accordance with the law of its own being ; each is possessed of the knowledge, the force, the measure

and kind of delight of existence precisely proper to its own being, and each works in the gradations of experience decreed by this inherent will and law. It is thus perfect in the relation of its phenomena to the law of its being ; for all are in harmony with that, spring out of it, adapt themselves to its purpose according to the infallibility of the divine will and knowledge at work within the creature. It is perfect and divine in relation to the whole, in its proper place in the whole, because all is a harmony of the divine manifestation ; to that it is necessary and in that it fulfils a part by which the perfection actual and progressive of the universal harmony, the adaptation of all in it to its whole purpose and its whole sense is helped and completed. If to us things appear undivine, if we hasten to condemn this or that phenomenon as inconsistent with the nature of the divine being, it is because we are ignorant of the sense and purpose of the Divine in the world in its entirety ; we see only parts and fragments and judge of each by itself as if it were the whole, judge also the external phenomena without knowing their secret sense and so vitiate our valuation of things by an initial and fundamental error.

Certainly, all this is true so far as it goes, but it also is as a solution incomplete by itself and cannot give us entire satisfaction, for it takes insufficient account of the human consciousness and the human view from which we have to start ; it cannot satisfy or convince but only contradicts by a cold intellectual conception our strong human sense of the reality of evil and imperfection and it gives no lead to our strong human aspiration towards the conquest of evil and imperfection. By itself, it amounts to little more than the facile dogma which tells us that all that is, is right, because all is perfectly decreed by the divine Wisdom. It gives us nothing better than a complacent intellectual and philosophic optimism and it gives us no key to the disconcerting facts of pain, suffering

and discord to which our human consciousness bears constant and troubling witness ; it merely suggests that in the divine reason of things there is a key to which we have no access. If the human consciousness were confined to the sense of this imperfection and the acceptance of it as a law of our life and nature,—a reasoned acceptance that answers to our human nature as the blind animal acceptance to the animal nature,—then we might say that it marked the limit of the divine self-expression in us, that our suffering worked for the general harmony and perfection of things and might console ourselves with this philosophic balm for our wounds, satisfied with moving among the pitfalls of life with as much rational prudence or philosophic sagacity and resignation as our imperfect nature permitted. Or taking refuge in the more consoling fervours of religion we might submit to all as the will of God in the hope or the faith of recompense in a Paradise beyond where we might put on a more pure and perfect nature. But an essential part of our human consciousness and its workings distinguishing it entirely from the animal is a dissatisfaction with our imperfection even as a law of our life upon earth and an aspiration towards the conquest of all imperfections,—not only in a heaven beyond where it would be automatically impossible to be imperfect, but here and now in a life where perfection has to be conquered by evolution and struggle. This dissatisfaction and aspiration are as much the law of our being as that against which they revolt ; they too are divine, a divine dissatisfaction, and a divine aspiration. They presuppose an inherent or they promise a coming power of better things which will justify the dissatisfaction and satisfy the aspiration.

We admit that all works perfectly towards a divine end by a divine wisdom and therefore each thing is in that sense perfect and divine in its place, but we say that what is, is not the whole of the divine purpose ; what is,

is only justifiable, finds its perfect sense and satisfaction only by what can and will be. We admit that there is a key in the divine reason which would justify things as they are by revealing their right sense and true secret which is other than their outward sense and phenomenal appearance as seen by us, but we say that to search for and find that key is the law of our being. The sign of the finding is not a philosophic recognition and a resigned or sage acceptance of things as they are because of some divine sense and purpose in them which is beyond us, but an elevation towards the divine knowledge and power which will transform the law and phenomena and external forms of our life nearer to a true image of that divine sense and purpose. We are prepared to endure suffering and all subjection to defect as the immediate will of God, a present law of imperfection laid on our members, but we say that it is also the will of God in us to conquer the suffering and to transform all imperfection into perfection by our rising into a higher law of the Divine. We recognise in our human consciousness an ideal truth of being, a divine nature, an incipient godhead and in relation to that higher truth our present state of imperfection is for us at least an undivine life and the conditions of the world from which we start are undivine conditions ; for they are by their very imperfection rather the disguise than the expression of the divine being and the divine nature. To strip off the disguise and to reveal or, in the Vedic phrase, to create the Divine in the manifest spirit, mind, life and body of our nature is to fulfil the highest law of our being. Our present nature is transitional ; our present status only our opportunity for another that shall be divine and perfect not only by the secret spirit within it but in the manifest form and body of our being.

Essays on the Gita

THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE WORKS

This then is the Gita's doctrine of sacrifice. Its full sense depends on the idea of the Purushottama which as yet is not developed,—we find it set forth clearly only much later in the eighteen chapters,—and therefore we have had to anticipate the central teaching. At present the Teacher simply gives a hint, merely adumbrates this supreme presence of the Purushottama and his relation to the immobile Self in whom we have to find our poise of perfect peace and equality by attainment to the Brahmic condition. He speaks as yet not in set terms of the Purushottama, but of himself, — “I”, Krishna, the Narayana, the God in man who is also the Lord in the universe incarnated in the figure of the divine charioteer of Kurukshetra. “In the Self, then in Me”, is the formula he gives, implying that the transcendence of the individual personality by seeing it as a “becoming” in the impersonal self-existent Being is simply a means of arriving at that great impersonal Personality, which is silent, calm and uplifted above Nature in the impersonal Being, active in Nature in all these million becomings. Losing our lower individual personality in the Impersonal, we arrive finally at union with that supreme Personality which is not separate and individual, but assumes all individualities. Transcending the lower nature of the three gunas and seating the soul in the immobile Purusha

beyond the three *gunas*, we ascend finally into the higher nature of the infinite Godhead which is not bound by the three *gunas* even when it acts through Nature. Reaching the inner actionlessness of the silent Purusha, *naishkarmya*, and leaving Prakriti to do her works, we attain supremely beyond to the status of the divine Mastery which is able to do all works and yet be bound by none. The idea of the Purushottama, Krishna, is therefore the key. Without it the withdrawal from the lower nature to the Brahmic condition leads necessarily to inaction of the liberated man, his indifference to the works of the world ; with it the same withdrawal becomes a step by which the works of the world are taken up in the spirit, with the nature and in the freedom of the Divine. See the silent Brahman as the goal and the world with all its activities has to be forsaken ; see God, the Divine, the Purushottama as the goal and the world with all its activities is conquered and possessed in a divine transcendence of the world. It becomes instead of a prison-house the opulent kingdom, *rājyam samridham*, which we have conquered by slaying the limitation of the ego and overcoming the bondage of our desires and our limiting individualistic possession and enjoyment. The liberated soul becomes *swarât samrât*, self-ruler and emperor.

The works of sacrifice are thus a means of liberation and absolute spiritual perfection, *samsiddhi*. So Janaka and other great Karmayogins of the mighty ancient Yoga attained to perfection, by equal and desireless works done as a sacrifice without egoistic aim or attachment,—: *karmaṇaiva hi samsiddhim āsthitā janakādayah*. So too, and with the same desirelessness, after liberation and perfection, works have to be continued in a large divine spirit, with the calm high nature of a spiritual royalty. "Thou shouldst do works regarding also the holding together of the peoples, *lokasaugraham evāpi sampañyan kartum arhasi*. Whatsoever the Best doeth, that the lower

kind of man puts into practice; the standard he creates, the people follows. O son of Pritha, I have no work that I need to do in all the three worlds, I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain, and I abide verily in the paths of action," *varta eva cha karmani*,—*eva* implying, I abide in it and do not leave it as the Sannyasin thinks himself bound to abandon works. "For if I did not abide sleeplessly in the paths of action, men follow in every way my path, these peoples would sink to destruction if I did not work and I should be the creator of confusion and slay these creatures. As those who know not act with attachment to the action, he who knows should act without attachment, having for his motive to hold together the peoples. He should not create a division of their understanding in the ignorant who are attached to their works; he should set them to all actions doing them himself with knowledge and in Yoga." There are few more important passages in the Gita than these seven striking couplets.

But let us clearly understand that they must not be interpreted, as the modern pragmatic tendency concerned much more with the present affairs of the world than with any high and far-off spiritual possibility seeks to interpret them, as no more than a philosophical and religious justification of social service, patriotic, cosmopolitan and humanitarian effort and attachment to the hundred eager social schemes and dreams which attract the modern intellect. It is not the rule of a large moral and intellectual altruism which is here announced, but that of a spiritual unity with God and with this world of beings who dwell in him and in whom he dwells. It is not an injunction to subordinate the individual to society and humanity or immolate egoism on the altar of the human collectivity, but to fulfil the individual in God and to sacrifice the ego on the one true altar of the all-embracing Divinity. The Gita moves on a plane of ideas and ex-

periences higher than those of the modern mind which is at the stage indeed of a struggle to shake off the coils of egoism, but is still mundane in its outlook and intellectual and moral rather than spiritual in its temperament. Patriotism, cosmopolitanism, service of society, collectivism, humanitarianism, the ideal or religion of humanity are admirable aids towards our escape from our primary condition of individual, family, social, national egoism into a secondary stage in which the individual realises, as far as it can be done on the intellectual, moral and emotional level,—on that level he cannot do it entirely in the right and perfect way, the way of the integral truth of his being,—the oneness of his existence with the existence of other beings. But the thought of the Gita reaches beyond to a tertiary condition of our developing self-consciousness towards which the secondary is only a partial stage of advance.

The Indian social tendency has been to subordinate the individual to the claims of society, but Indian religious thought and spiritual seeking have been always loftily individualistic in their aims. An Indian system of thought like the Gita's cannot possibly fail to put first the development of the individual, the highest need of the individual, his claim to discover and exercise his largest spiritual freedom, greatness, splendour, royalty,—his aim to develop into the illumined seer and king in the spiritual sense of seerdom and kingship, which was the first great charter of the ideal humanity promulgated by the ancient Vedic sages. To exceed himself was their goal for the individual, not by losing all his personal aims in the aims of an organised human society, but by enlarging, heightening, aggrandizing himself into the consciousness of the Godhead. The rule given here by the Gita is the rule for the master man, the superman, the divinised human being, the Best, not in the sense of any Nietzschean, any onesided and lopsided, any Olympian,

Apollinian or Dionysian, any angelic or demoniac supermanhood, but in that of the man whose whole personality has been offered up into the being, nature and consciousness of the one transcendent and universal Divinity.

To exalt oneself out of the lower imperfect Prakriti, *traigunyamayî Mâyâ*, into unity with the divine being, consciousness and nature,* *madbhâvam âgatâh*, is the object of the Yoga. But when this object is fulfilled, when the man is in the Brahmic status and sees no longer with the false egoistic vision himself and the world, but sees all beings in the Self, in God and the Self in all beings, God in all beings, what shall be the action,—since action there still is,—which results from that seeing, and what shall be the cosmic or individual motive of all his works? It is the question of Arjuna,† but answered from a standpoint other than that from which Arjuna had put it. The motive cannot be personal desire on the intellectual, moral, emotional level, for that has been abandoned,—even the moral motive has been abandoned since the liberated man has passed beyond the lower distinction of sin and virtue, lives in a glorified purity beyond good and evil. It cannot be the spiritual call to his perfect self-development by means of disinterested works, for the call has been answered, the development is perfect and fulfilled. His motive of action can only be the holding together of the peoples, *chikîrshur lokasaugraham*. This great march of the peoples towards a far-off divine ideal has to be held together, prevented from falling into the bewilderment, confusion and utter discord of the understanding which would lead to dissolution and destruction and to which the world moving forward in the night or dark twilight of ignorance would be too easily prone if it were not held together, conducted, kept to the great lines of its disci-

* *Sâyujya, sâlokya and sâdharmya*. *Sadharmya* is becoming of one law of being and action with the Divine.

† *Kim prabhâsketa kim âsita vrajeta kim.*

pline by the illumination, by the strength, by the rule and example, by the visible standard and the invisible influence of its Best. The best, the individuals who are in advance of the general line and above the general level of the collectivity, are the natural leaders of mankind, for it is they who can point to the race both the way they must follow and the standard or ideal they have to keep to or to attain. But the divinised man is the Best in no ordinary sense of the word and his influence, his example must have a power which that of no ordinarily superior man can exercise. What example then shall he give? What rule or standard shall be uphold?

In order to indicate more perfectly his meaning, the divine Teacher, the Avatar gives his own example, his own standard to Arjuna. "I abide in the path of action," he seems to say, "the path that all men follow; thou too must abide in action. In the way I act, in that way thou too must act. I am above the necessity of works, for I have nothing to gain by them; I am the Divine who possess all things and all beings in the world and myself beyond the world as well as in it and I do not depend upon anything or any one in all the three worlds for any object; yet I act. This too must be thy manner and spirit of working. I, the Divine, am the rule and the standard; it is I who make the path in which men tread; I am the way and the goal. But I do all this largely, universally, visibly in part, but far more invisibly; and men do not really know the way of my workings. Thou when thou knowest and seest, when thou hast become the divinised man, must be the individual power of God, the human yet divine example, even as I am in my avatars. Most men dwell in the ignorance, the God-seer dwells in the knowledge; but let him not confuse the minds of men by a dangerous example, rejecting in his superiority the works of the world; let him not cut short the thread of action before it is spun out, let him not perplex and

falsify the stages and gradations of the ways I have hewn. The whole range of human action has been decreed by me with a view to the progress of man from the lower to the higher nature, from the apparent undivine to the conscious Divine. The whole range of human works must be that in which the God-knower shall move. All individual, all social action, all the works of the intellect, the heart and the body are still his, not any longer for his own separate sake, but for the sake of God in the world, of God in all beings and that all those beings may move forward, as he has moved, by the path of works towards the discovery of the Divine in themselves. Outwardly his actions may not seem to differ essentially from theirs ; battle and rule as well as teaching and thought, all the various commerce of man with man may fall in his range ; but the spirit in which he does them, must be very different, and it is that spirit which by its influence shall be the great attraction drawing men upwards to his own level, the great lever lifting the mass of men higher in their ascent."

This giving of the example of God himself to the liberated man is profoundly significant ; for it reveals the whole basis of the Gita's philosophy of divine works. The liberated man is he who has exalted himself into the divine nature and according to that divine nature must be his actions. But what is the divine nature ? It is not that of the Akshara, the immobile, inactive, impersonal self ; for that by itself would lead the liberated man to actionless immobility. It is not that of the Kshara, the multitudinous, the personal, the Purusha self-subjected to Prakriti ; for that by itself would lead him back into subjection to his personality and to the lower nature and its qualities. It is the nature of the Purushottama who holds both these together and by his supreme divinity reconciles them in a divine reconciliation which is the highest secret of his being, *rahasyam hyetad uttamam*. He is

not the doer of works in the personal sense of our action involved in Prakriti, for God works through his power, conscious nature, effective force,—Shakti, Maya, Prakriti,—but yet above it, not involved in it, not subject to it, not unable to lift himself beyond the laws, workings, habits of action it creates, not affected or bound by them, not unable to distinguish himself, as we are unable, from the workings of life, mind and body. He is the doer of works who act not, *kartāram akartāram*. “Know me” says Krishna “for the doer of this (the fourfold law of human workings) who am yet the imperishable non-doer. Works fix not themselves on me (*na linṇanti*), nor have I desire for the fruits of action.” But neither is he the inactive, impassive, unpuissant Witness and nothing else ; for it is he who works in the steps and measures of his power ; every movement of it, every particle of the world of beings it forms is instinct with his presence, full of his consciousness, impelled by his will, shaped by his knowledge.

He is, besides, the Supreme without qualities who is possessed of all qualities, *nirguno guṇi*.* He is not bound by any mode of nature or action, nor consists, as our personality consists, of a sum of qualities, modes of nature, characteristic operations of the mental, moral, emotional, vital, physical being, but is the source of all modes and qualities, capable of developing any he wills in whatever way and to whatever degree he wills ; he is the infinite being of which they are ways of becoming, the immeasurable quantity and unbound ineffable of which they are measures, numbers and figures, which they seem to rhythmise and arithmise in the standards of the universe. Yet neither is he merely an impersonal indeterminate, nor a mere stuff of conscious existence for all determinations and personalisings to draw upon for their material, but a

* *Upanishad* .

supreme Being, the one original conscious Existent, the perfect Personality capable of all relations even to the most human, concrete and intimate ; for he is friend, comrade, lover, playmate, guide, teacher, master, ministrant of knowledge or ministrant of joy, yet in all relations unbound, free and absolute. This too the divinised man becomes in the measure of his attainment, impersonal in his personality, unbound by quality or action even when maintaining the most personal and intimate relations with men, unbound by any *dharma* even when following in appearance this or that *dharma*. Neither the dynamism of the kinetic man, nor the actionless light of the ascetic or quietist, neither the vehement personality of the man of action nor the indifferent impersonality of the philosophic sage is the complete divine ideal. These are the two conflicting standards of the man of this world and the ascetic or the quietist philosopher, one immersed in the action of the Kshara, the other striving to dwell entirely in the peace of the Akshara ; but the complete divine ideal proceeds from the nature of the Purushottama which transcends this conflict and reconciles all divine possibilities.

The kinetic man is not satisfied with any ideal which does not depend upon the fulfilment of this cosmic nature, this play of the three qualities of that nature, this human activity of mind and heart and body. The highest fulfilment of that activity, he might say, is my idea of human perfection, of the divine possibility in man ; some ideal that satisfies the intellect, the heart, the moral being, some ideal of our human nature in its action can alone satisfy the human being ; he must have something that he can seek in the workings of his mind and life and body. For that is his nature, his *dharma*, and how can he be fulfilled in something outside his nature ? for to his nature each being is bound and within it he must seek for his perfection. According to our human nature must be our

human perfection ; and each man must strive for it according to the line of his personality, his *swadharma*, but in life, in action, not outside life and action. Yes, there is a truth in that, replies the Gita ; the fulfilment of God in man, the play of the Divine in life is part of the ideal perfection. But if you seek it only in the external, in life, in the principle of action, you will never find it ; for you will not only act according to your nature, but you will be eternally subject to its modes, its dualities of liking and dislike, pain and pleasure and especially to the rajasic mode with its principle of desire and its snare of wrath and grief and longing,—the restless, all-devouring principle of desire, the insatiable fire which besieges your worldly action, the eternal enemy of knowledge by which it is covered over here in your nature as is a fire by smoke or a mirror by dust and which you must slay in order to live in the calm, clear, luminous truth of the spirit. The senses, mind and intellect are the seat of this eternal cause of imperfection and yet it is within this sense, mind and intellect, this play of the lower nature that you would limit your search for perfection ! The effort is vain. The kinetic side of your nature must first seek to add to itself the quietistic ; you must uplift yourself beyond this lower nature to that which is above the three gunas, that which is founded in the highest principle, in the soul. Only when you have attained to peace of soul, can you become capable of a free and divine action.

The quietist, the ascetic on the other hand cannot see any possibility of perfection into which life and action enter. Are they not the very seat of bondage and imperfection ? Is not all action imperfect in its nature, like a fire that must produce smoke, is not the principle of action itself rajasic, the father of desire, a cause that must have its effect of obscuration of knowledge, its round of longing and success and failure, its oscillations of joy and grief, its duality of virtue and sin ? God may

be in the world, but he is not of the world ; he is a God of renunciation and not the Master or cause of our works; the master of our works is desire and the cause of works is ignorance. If the world, the Kshara is in a sense a manifestation or a *lila* of the Divine, it is an imperfect play with the ignorance of Nature, an obscuration rather than a manifestation. That is evident from our very first glance at the nature of the world and the fullest experience of the world teaches us always the same truth ; it is a wheel of the ignorance binding the soul to continual birth by the impulse of desire and action until at last that is exhausted or cast away. Not only desire, but action also must be flung away ; seated in the silent self the soul will then pass away into the motionless, actionless, imperturbable, absolute Brahman. To this objection of the impersonalising quietist the Gita is at more pains to answer than to that of the man of the world, the kinetic individual. For this quietism, having hold of a higher and more powerful truth which is yet not the whole or the highest truth, its promulgation as the universal, complete, highest ideal of human life is likely to be more confusing and disastrous to the advance of the human race towards its goal than the error of an exclusive kineticism. A strong onesided truth, when set forth as the whole truth, creates a strong light but also a strong confusion ; for the very strength of the element of truth increases the strength of the element of error. The error of the kinetic ideal can only prolong the ignorance and retard the human advance by setting it in search of perfection where perfection cannot be found ; but the error of the quietistic ideal contains in itself the very principle of world-destruction. Were I to act upon it, says Krishna, I should destroy the peoples and be the author of confusion; and though the error of an individual human being, even though a nearly divine man, cannot destroy the whole race, it may produce a widespread

confusion which may be in its nature destructive of the principle of human life and disturbing to the settled line of its advance.

Therefore the quietistic tendency in man must be got to recognise its own incompleteness and admit on an equality with itself the truth which lies behind the kinetic tendency,—the fulfilment of God in man and the presence of the Divine in all the action of the human race. God is there not only in the silence, but in the action; the quietism of the impassive soul unaffected by Nature and the kinetism of the soul giving itself to nature so that the great world-sacrifice, the Purusha-Yajna, may be effected, are not a reality and a falsehood in perpetual struggle nor yet two hostile realities, one superior, the other inferior, each fatal to the other; they are the double term of the divine manifestation. The Akshara is not the whole key of their fulfilment, not the highest secret; their fulfilment, their reconciliation is in the Purushottama represented here by Krishna, at once supreme Being, Lord of the worlds and Avatar. The divinised man entering into his divine nature will act even as he acts; he will not give himself up to inaction. The Divine is at work in man in the ignorance and at work in man in the knowledge. To know Him is our soul's highest welfare and the condition of its perfection, but to know and realise Him as a transcendent peace and silence is not all; the secret that has to be learned is at once the secret of the eternal and unborn Divine and the secret of the divine birth and works, *janma karma cha me divyam*. The action which proceeds from that knowledge, will be free from all bondage; "he who so knoweth me" says the Teacher, "is not bound by works." If the escape from the obligation of works and desire and from the wheel of rebirth is the aim and the ideal, then this knowledge is the true, the broad way of escape; for, says the Gita, "he who knows in its right principles my divine birth and

works, comes when he leaves his body, not to rebirth, but to Me, O Arjuna." Through the knowledge and possession of the divine birth he comes to the unborn and imperishable Divine who is the Self of all beings, *aṣṭaśya ātmā* ; through the knowledge and possession of divine works, he comes to the Master of works, the Lord of all beings, *bhūtānām īśwara*. In that unborn being he lives and he works in that universal Mastery.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XXXIV

VIJNANA OR GNOSIS

For the perfect self-transcendence we have to draw up, the Upanishad has said, our mental conscious-being into the knowledge-self and to dwell in the divine knowledge by change into the knowledge-soul, the *vijnâna-maya* Purusha. Seated on that level of the Vedic hill of ascent we shall be in quite a different plane of being from this material, this vital, this mental soul and nature of things which is our present view and experience of our soul-life and of the world. We shall be born into a new soul-status and put on a new nature ; for according to the status of the soul is the status of the Prakriti. As the conscious-soul rises to a higher level of being, the nature also is elevated into a superior working, a wider consciousness, a vaster force, an intenser and purer joy of existence ; but the transition from the mind-self to the knowledge-self is the great and the decisive transition in the Vedic Yoga. It is the shaking off of the last hold of the cosmic ignorance on our nature and its firm foundation in the infinite Truth of things. So long as we are in the triple formula of mind, life and body, our nature works upon the basis of the ignorance even when the soul reflects the knowledge ; for though the soul

reflects the knowledge in consciousness, it is unable to mobilise it rightly in force of action. The truth in its action may greatly increase, but it is pursued by a limitation, condemned to a divisibility which prevents it from working integrally in the power and knowledge of the infinite ; its power may be immense compared with ordinary powers, but it is still subject to incapacity and there is no perfect correspondence between the force of the effective will and the light of the idea which inspires it ; the light of the infinite Presence may be there in status, but the dynamis of the operations of our nature still belongs to the lower Prakriti and its triple modes of working. But the *vijnâna* or gnosis is the very working of the infinite and divine nature ; it is the divine knowledge one with the divine will in the delight of spontaneous and luminous self-fulfilment. By the gnosis, then, we change our human into a divine nature.

What then is this gnosis and how can we describe it ? There are in the ordinary philosophical notions of the term *vijnâna* two opposite errors which disfigure two opposite sides of the truth with regard to the gnosis. In one *vijnâna* is used as synonymous with the *buddhi* and the Indian term *buddhi* as synonymous with the reason or discerning intellect. The classifications which accept this significance, pass at once from a plane of pure intellect to a plane of pure spirit ; they recognise no intermediate power, no diviner action of knowledge than the pure reason. In the other error it is supposed that *vijnâna* is the consciousness which gives us the knowledge of the Infinite free from all ideation or with ideation packed into one essence of thought, lost in the single and invariable idea of the One, the *chaitanyaghana* of the Upanishad. But the gnosis, the *vijnâna* is not only this concentrated consciousness of the infinite Being, it is also the infinite knowledge of the play of the Infinite ; it contains all ideation in itself though it is not limited by

ideation. This ideation, however, is not in its character intellectual ideation, not what we call the reason ; for that is mental in its methods, mental in its basis, mental in its acquisitions, but the ideation of the gnosis is supramental in its methods, its basis, its yield of thought-light. There is a relation, even a sort of broken identity between the two forms of thought, one indeed proceeds from the other ; but they act on different planes and reverse each other's process. Even the purest reason, the most luminous rational intellectuality is not the gnosis.

Reason or intellect is only the lower *buddhi*, dependent for its action on the percepts of the sense-mind and the concepts of the mental intelligence. There is, indeed, a higher form of the *buddhi*, often called the intuitive mind or intuitive reason, which by its intuitions, inspirations, swift revelatory vision, luminous insight and discrimination seems to do the work of the reason with a higher power, a swifter action, a self-light of the truth which does not depend upon the sense-mind or its percepts and proceeds not by intelligent, but by visional concepts. This real intuition must be distinguished from another power of the reason which is sometimes confused with it, its power of reaching its conclusion by a bound and not by the ordinary steps of the logical mind. The logical reason proceeds step by step trying the sureness of each step like a man walking over unsure ground and testing by the touch of his foot each pace of soil that he perceives with his eye. This other process of the reason is a process of rapid insight or swift discernment which proceeds by a stride or leap, like a man leaping from one sure spot to another point of sure footing ; he sees the space he covers in one compact and flashing view, but he does not distinguish or measure either by eye or touch its successions, features and circumstances.

This process has something of the sense of power of the intuition, something of its velocity, some appearance

of its light and certainty, and we are apt to mistake it for the intuition. It is often thought that the intuition is nothing more than this rapid process in which the whole action of the logical mind is swiftly done or done half-consciously or subconsciously, but not at first deliberately worked out in its reasoned method. In its nature, however, this proceeding is quite different from the intuition ; the power of its leap may end in a stumble, its swiftness may betray, its certainty is often an error. The validity of its conclusion must always depend on a subsequent verification by the evidence of the sense-perceptions or a rational linking of intelligent conceptions. But the intuition carries in itself its own guarantee of truth ; it is sure and infallible within its limits, so long as it is pure intuition and does not admit into itself any mixture of sense-error or intellectual ideation, ; it may be verified by the reason or the sense-perception afterwards, but its truth does not depend on that verification. If the reason depending on its inferences contradicts it, it will be found in the end on ampler knowledge that the intuitional conclusion was correct and the rational and inferential conclusion mistaken. For the real intuition proceeds from the self-existent truth of things and by that self-existent truth and not by any indirect, derivatory or dependent method of arriving at knowledge.

But even the intuitive reason is not the gnosis ; it is only the light of the gnosis finding its way by flashes of illumination into the mentality. Its inspirations, revelations, intuitions, self-luminous discernings are messages from a higher knowledge-plane that make their way into our lower level of consciousness. This character of the intuitive mind sets a great difference between its action and the action of the self-contained gnosis. In the first place it acts by separate and limited illuminations and its truth is restricted to the often narrow reach or the one brief spot of knowledge lit up by that one lightning-flash.

We see the action of the instinct in animals,—an automatic intuition in that sense-mind which is all that the animal has to rely on, since it does not possess the human light of the reason,—and we can observe that the marvellous truth of this instinct which seems so much surer than the reason, is limited to some particular and restricted utility it is intended to serve. When the mind of the animal tries to act beyond that restricted limit, it blunders in a much blinder way than the reason of man and has to learn with difficulty by a succession of sense-experiences. The mental intuition of the human being is a visional, not a sense intuition ; it illumines the intelligence and not the sense-mind ; it is self-conscious and luminous, not a half subconscious blind light ; it is self-acting, but not mechanically automatic. But still it is restricted like the instinct, restricted to a particular purpose of will or knowledge, as is the instinct to a particular purpose of life utility. When the intelligence tries to make use of it, to apply it, to add to it, it builds round it in its own characteristic fashion a mass of mixed truth and error ; it may even, by foisting an element of sense-error and conceptual error into the substance of the intuition or coating it up in error, not merely deflect but deform its truth and convert it into a falsehood. At the best therefore the intuition gives us only a limited, though an intense light ; at the worst, by our misuse of it, it may lead us into perplexities and confusions which the less ambitious intellectual reason avoids by remaining satisfied with its own safe and plodding method,—safe for the inferior purposes of the reason, though never a guide to the inner truth of things.

It is possible to cultivate and extend the use of the intuitive mind in proportion as we rely less predominantly upon the intellectual reason. We may train our mentality not, as it does now, to seize upon every separate flash of intuitive illumination and then precipitate our thought at

once into a crystallising intellectual action around it, but to think in a stream of successive and connected intuitions. We shall be successful in proportion as we purify the intelligence itself and reduce in it the element of material thought enslaved to the external appearances of things, of vital thought enslaved to the wishes, desires, impulses of the being and of intellectual thought enslaved to our preferred, already settled or congenial ideas, conceptions, opinions, operations of intelligence and replace them by an intuitive sense or insight into appearances, an intuitive will, an intuitive ideation. This is difficult enough for our consciousness which is naturally bound by the triple cord of mentality, vitality, corporeality,—the upper, middle and lower cord in the Vedic parable of the soul's bondage to the mixed truth and falsehood of appearances by which Cūmahçepa was bound to the post of sacrifice.

But even if it were perfectly accomplished, still the intuitive mentality would not be the gnosis ; it would only be its reflection. The difference, difficult enough to define except by symbols, may be expressed by taking the Vedic image in which the Sun represents the gnosis and the sky, mid-air and earth the mentality, vitality, corporeality of man. Living on the earth, climbing into the mid-air or even winging in the sky, the mental being, the *manomaya* Purusha, would still live in the rays of the sun and not in its bodily light ; and he would see things as reflected in his organ of vision, deformed by its faults or limited in their truth by its restrictions. But the *rijnânāmaya* Purusha lives in the Sun itself, in the very body and blaze of the true light ;* he would know it self-luminously as his own being and he would see besides all that dwells in the rays of the sun, see the whole truth of the lower triplicity and each thing that is in it. He would see it not by reflection in a mental organ of vision, but with the

* So the Sun is called in the Veda, *ritam jyotih*.

Sun of gnosis itself as his eye,—the Sun, says the Veda, is the eye of the gods. The mental being, even in the intuitive mind, can perceive the truth only by reflection and subject to the restrictions and inferior capacity of the mental vision; the *vijnānamaya* would see it by the gnosis itself, from the very centre and outwelling fount of the truth, in its very form and by its own spontaneous and self-illuminating process. For the *vijnāna* is the direct and divine as opposed to the indirect and human knowledge.

The nature of the gnosis can only be indicated intellectually by contrasting it with the nature of the intellectual mentality, and even then in phrases which do not illuminate unless aided by some amount of actual experience,—for what language forged by the reason can really express the suprarational? The mental reason proceeds from ignorance to truth, the gnosis has in itself the direct and immediate vision of the truth. The reason starts with appearances and labours, never or seldom losing at least a partial dependence on appearances, to arrive at the truth behind them; the gnosis starts from the truth and shows the appearances in the light of the truth. The reason proceeds by inference, it concludes; the gnosis proceeds by vision,—it sees and knows. As the physical eye sees and grasps the appearance of objects, so the gnosis sees and grasps the truth of things; and where the physical sense gets into relation with objects by contact, the gnosis gets into identity with things by oneness. Thus it is able to know all things as a man knows his own existence, directly. To the reason only what the senses give is direct knowledge, *pratyaksha*, the rest of truth is arrived at indirectly; to the gnosis all its truth is direct knowledge, *pratyaksha*. Therefore the truth gained by the intellect is an acquisition over which there hangs always a certain shadow of doubt, an incompleteness, a surrounding penumbra of night and ignorance or half-

knowledge, a possibility of alteration or annihilation by farther knowledge. The truth of the gnosis is free from doubt, self-evident, self-existent.

The reason has as its first instrument observation general, analytical, synthetic ; it aids itself by comparison, contrast and analogy ; it proceeds from experience to indirect knowledge by logical processes of inference, by deduction, by induction ; it rests upon memory, reaches out beyond itself by imagination, secures itself by judgment ; all is a process of groping and seeking. The gnosis does not seek, it possesses ; or if it has to enlighten, it does not even then seek, but reveals. In a consciousness rising from intelligence towards gnosis, imagination would be progressively replaced by truth-inspiration, judgment by a self-luminous discerning, the logical process from reasoning to conclusion by a swift intuitive proceeding which sees the conclusion or fact at once and all the evidence by which we arrive at it not as its evidence, but as its circumstances and relations seen in one comprehensive view ; observation would be replaced by vision not merely of the thing, but its truth, and our uncertain memory by luminous possession of knowledge not as a store of acquisition, but as a thing always contained in one's own consciousness.

For while the reason proceeds from moment to moment of time losing and acquiring and losing again and acquiring again, the gnosis possesses time in one view and links past, present and future in their indivisible connections. The gnosis starts from the totality and sees parts, groups and details only in relation to the totality, while the mental reason cannot really see the totality at all and does not know fully any whole except by starting from an analysis and synthesis of its parts, masses and details ; otherwise its whole-view is always a vague or imperfect or a confused view. The reason deals with processes and properties and tries in vain to form by them

an idea of the thing in itself ; the gnosis sees the thing in itself, its original and eternal nature and its processes and properties only as a self-expression of its nature. The reason dwells in the diversity and deals with thing separately and treats each as a separate existence, as it deals with sections of Time and divisions of Space ; it sees unity only in a sum or by elimination of diversity or as a general conception : the gnosis dwells in the unity and starts from the unity and it sees diversities only of a unity, it does not recognise any real division nor treat things separately as if they were independent of their real and original unity. The reason deals with the finite and is helpless before the infinite which it can conceive of readily only as an indefinite extension in which the finite acts ; it can with difficulty conceive and cannot at all grasp the infinite in itself ; but the gnosis lives in the infinite, starts always from the infinite and knows finite things only in their relation to the infinite and in the sense of the infinite.

If we would describe the gnosis, not thus imperfectly as it is in contrast with the reason, but as it is in itself, we can hardly speak of it except in figures and symbols, We must remember that the *vijnānamaya* level is not the supreme plane of our consciousness, but a middle or link plane interposed between the triune glory of the utter Spirit, the infinite existence, consciousness and bliss, and our lower triple being. Sachchidananda gathers up the light of his existence into the gnosis and pours it out as the divine knowledge, will and joy of being upon the soul, as if infinite light were gathered up into the compact orb of the sun and poured upon all that depends upon the sun. The gnosis is not only light but force, it is creative knowledge, self-effective truth of the divine Idea. This idea is not creative imagination, not something that creates in a void, but truth-light full of truth-force ; it brings out what is latent in its being, it does not create

a fiction that never was in being. As is the Idea, so is its ideation ; the ideation of the gnos̥is is radiating light-stuff of the consciousness of being, each ray a truth ; its will is a conscious force throwing the consciousness and substance of being into infallible forms which embody the idea and work it out spontaneously and rightly according to its nature. Because of this creative force of the divine Idea, the Sun, the lord and symbol of the gnos̥is, is described in the Veda as the Light which is the father of all things, Surya Savitri, the Wisdom-Luminous who is the bringer-out into being. Its creation is inspired by the Ananda, the divine delight,—it is full of the joy of its own truth and power in the creating ; therefore the world of the gnos̥is is the *ritam* and the *bladram*, the true and the happy creation, since all in it shares in its perfect joy. Divine knowledge, divine will and divine bliss received, concentrated, thrown out in action of knowledge, will and delight is the nature or Prakriti of the soul in *vijnāna*.

Thus there are three powers of the *vijnāna*. It knows and receives the infinite being, consciousness and bliss into itself and in its highest height it is the knowledge of infinite Sachchidananda ; it concentrates all into the dense luminous consciousness, *chaitanyaghana* or *chidghana*, the seed-state of the divine consciousness in which all the principles of the divine being, all the truths of the divine conscious-idea and nature are contained ; it brings or looses it out by effective ideation of the divine knowledge, will-force and delight into a universal harmony or rhythm of being. The mental Purusha rising into the *vijnānamaya* will therefore ascend into these three powers, turning by conversion into the powers of the gnos̥is its mental ideation into that of the divine knowledge, will-force and delight, turning its conscious stuff of mental nature and being into the *chidghana* or dense self-luminous consciousness from which the ideation proceeds,

turning its conscious self into a *vijnâna* self or Truth-self of infinite Sachchidananda ; from that the whole *vijnâna-maya* nature and activity proceed. These three movements are described in the Isha Upanishad as *vyûha*, the marshalling of the rays of the Sun of gnosis in the order of the Truth-consciousness, *samûha*, the gathering together of the rays into the body of the Sun of gnosis, and the vision of that Sun's fairest form of all in which the soul possesses its infinite oneness with the supreme Purusha,* crying *So Aham*. God above and the soul dwelling in and one with the Divine,—the infinite power and truth of the Divine concentrated in the luminous nature of the soul's being,—the radiating activity of the divine knowledge, will and joy perfect in the natural action of its Prakriti,—this is the experience of the soul in gnosis.

* *Sûrya racmîn vyûha samûha tejo yat te kalûṣṇatamam rūpam tat te paçyami yo 'sâu asau puruṣaḥ so 'ham asmi*. The Veda describes the *vijnâna* plane as *ritam*, *satyam*, *brihat*, the Right, Truth, Vast, the same triple idea differently expressed. *Ritam* is the action of the divine knowledge, will and joy in the order of the truth, *satyam* the truth of being which so acts, *brihat* the infinity of Sachchidananda out of which they proceed and in which they are founded.

The Eternal Wisdom

THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH

SIMPLICITY: MODESTY

- 1 Let not therefore the wise man glory in his wisdom,
neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let
not the rich man glory in his riches.
- 2 A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour
- 3 shall uphold the humble in spirit.—Pride goeth be-
fore destruction, but before honour is humility.—
- 4 Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he
that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
- 5 If you give to a man all riches and all might and
he looks upon himself with the same humility as be-
fore, then that man far surpasses other human beings.
- 6 All the splendour of outward greatness has no
lustre for men who are in search of the Spirit. The
greatness of men of the Spirit is obnoxious to the
rich, the kings, the conquerors and all the men of
- 7 the flesh.—Such are they who have not acquired self-
knowledge, men who vaunt their science, are proud
of their wisdom, vain of their riches.

1) Jeremiah IX. 23.—2) Proverbs XXIX. 23.—3) id XVI. 18:
XVII. 12.—4) Luke XIV. 11.—5) Meng-tse.—6) Pascal : *Pensées*.—
7) Ramakrishna.

- 8 Man is good when he raises very high his divine and spiritual "I", but frightful when he wishes to exalt above men his fleshly "I" vain, ambitious and exclusive.



- 9 All other vanities can be gradually extinguished, but the vanity of the saint in his saintliness is difficult indeed to banish.—This is a great fault in men, to
10 love to be the models of others.—To be a man of worth and not to try to look like one is the true way to glory.
- 12 The supreme virtue does not consider itself a virtue and that is why it is virtue : the inferior positively believes itself to be virtue and that is why it is
13 not virtue.—Men of superior virtue practise it without thinking of it ; those of inferior virtue go about
14 it with intention.—The man of superior virtue is well pleased in the humblest situation. His heart loves to be deep as the abyss.
- 15 The saint does good and makes not much of it. He accomplishes great things and is not attached to them. He does not wish to let his wisdom appear.—
16 The saint does not seek to do great things; that is why he is able to accomplish them.
- 17 When one has done great things and made a reputation, one should withdraw out of view.—The
18 man who has done good does not cry it through the world.—So long as a man has a little knowledge, he goes everywhere reading and preaching; but when the perfect knowledge has been attained, one ceases
19 from vain ostentation.—Only the man who knows that God lives in his soul, can be humble ; such a one is absolutely indifferent to what men say of him.

8) Tolstoi.—9) Ramakrishna.—10) Meng-tse. 11) Socrates.—
12) Lao-Tse : Tao-te-King.—13) id.—14) id.—15) id.—16) id.—
17) id.—18) Marcus Aurelius.—19) Ramakrishna.—20) Tolstoi.

- 21 Take heed that ye do not alms before men, to be
 22 seen of them.—Make no parade of your wisdom ; it
 is a vanity which costs dear to many. Let wisdom
 correct your vices, but not attack those of others.
- 23 Mind not high things, but condescend to men of
 24 low estate. Be not wise in your own conceit.—I say
 to every man that is among you, not to think of him-
 self more highly than he ought to think, but to think
 soberly.
- 25 Be pure, be simple and hold always a just mean.—
 26 Unite always to a great exactitude uprightness and
 27 simplicity of heart.—Be ye wise as serpents and
 simple as doves.
- 28 Be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom ; be
 29 humbler still if thou hast attained to it—Seest thou
 a man wise in his own conceit ? there is more hope
 of a fool than of him.
- 30 Be not proud in thy riches, nor in thy strength,
 31 nor in thy wisdom.—If thou givest thyself up to the
 least pride, thou art no longer master of thyself, thou
 lovest thy understanding as if thou wert drunk with
 32 wine.—So long as thou livest in the bewilderment
 and seduction of pride, thou shalt abide far from the
 truth.
- 33 Thou hast cleansed thy heart of soil and bled it
 dry of impure desires. But, O glorious combatant,
 thy task is not yet done. Build high the wall which
 shall protect thy mind from pride and satisfaction at
 the thought of the great work accomplished.
- 34 Oh, if the heart could become a cradle and God
 once more a child upon the earth !

21) Matthew VI. 1.—22) Seneca.—23) Romans XII. 16.—
 24) id. XII. 3.—25) Chu-King.—26) id.—27) Matthew X. 16.—
 28) Book of Golden Precepts.—29) Proverbs XXVI. 12.—
 30) Phocylides.—31) Farid-ud-din-attar.—32) id.—33) Book of
 Golden Precepts.—34) Angelius Silesius.

The Psychology of Social Development

XIV

Religion is the seeking after the spiritual, the suprarational and therefore in this sphere the reason may well be an insufficient help and even feel itself, not only at the end but from the beginning, out of its province and condemned to tread either diffidently or else with a stumbling presumptuousness in the realm of a power and a light higher than its own. But in the other spheres of human consciousness and human activity it may be thought that it has the right to the sovereign place, since these move on the lower plane of the rational and the finite or even belong to that border-land where the rational and the infrarational meet and the impulses and the instincts of man stand in need above all of the light and the control of the reason. In its own sphere of finite knowledge, science, philosophy, the useful arts its right, one would think, must be indisputable. But this does not turn out in the end to be true. Its province may be larger, its powers more ample, its action more justly self-confident, but in the end everywhere it finds itself standing between the two other powers of our being and fulfilling in greater or less degree the same function of an intermediary. On one side it is an enlightener—not always

the chief enlightener—and the corrector of our life-impulses and first mental seekings, on the other it is only one minister of the veiled Spirit and a preparer of the paths for the coming of its rule.

This is especially evident in the two realms which in the ordinary scale of our powers stand nearest to and on either side of the reason itself, the aesthetic and the ethical being, the search for Beauty and the search for Good. Man's seeking after beauty reaches its most intense and satisfying expression in the great creative arts, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, but in its full extension there is no activity of his nature or his life from which it need or ought to be excluded,—provided we understand beauty both in its widest and its truest sense. A complete and universal appreciation of beauty and the making entirely beautiful our whole life and being must surely be a necessary character of the perfect individual and the perfect society. But in its origin this seeking for beauty is not rational ; it springs from the roots of our life, it is an instinct and an impulse, an instinct of aesthetic satisfaction and an impulse of aesthetic creation and enjoyment. Starting from the infrarational parts of our being, this instinct and impulse begin with much imperfection and impurity, with great crudities both in creation and in appreciation. It is here that the reason comes in to distinguish, to enlighten, to correct, to point out the deficiencies and the crudities, to lay down laws of aesthetics and to purify our appreciation and our creation by improved taste and right knowledge. While we are thus striving to learn and correct ourselves, it may seem to be the true lawgiver both for the artist and the admirer and though not the creator of our aesthetic instinct and impulse, yet the creator in us of an aesthetic conscience and its vigilant judge and guide. That which was an obscure and erratic activity, it makes self-conscious and rationally discriminative in its work and enjoyment.

But again this is entirely true only in restricted bounds and on a middle plane of our aesthetic seeking and activity. Where the greatest and most powerful creation of beauty is accomplished and its appreciation and enjoyment rise to the highest pitch, the rational is always surpassed and left behind. The creation of beauty in poetry and art does not fall within the sovereignty or even within the sphere of the reason. The intellect is not the poet, the artist, the creator within us ; creation comes by a suprarational influx of light and power which must work always, if it is to do its best, by vision and inspiration. It may use the intellect for certain of its operations, but in proportion as it subjects itself to the intellect, it loses in power and force of vision and diminishes the splendour and truth of the beauty it creates. The intellect may take hold of the influx, moderate and repress the divine enthusiasm of creation and force it to obey the prudence of its dictates, but in doing so it brings down the work to its own inferior level, and the lowering is in proportion to the intellectual interference. For by itself the intelligence can only achieve talent, though it may be a high and even, if sufficiently helped from above, a surpassing talent. Genius, the true creator, is always suprarational in its nature and its instrumentation even when it seems to be doing the work of the reason, and it is most itself, most exalted in its work, most sustained in the power, depth, height and beauty of its achievement when it is least touched by, least mixed with any control of the mere intellectuality and least often drops from its heights of vision and inspiration into reliance upon the always mechanical process of intellectual construction. Art-creation which accepts the canons of the reason and works within the limits laid down by it, may be great, beautiful and powerful ; for genius can preserve its power even when it labours in shackles and refuses to put forth all its resources ; but when it proceeds by means of the intellect,

it constructs, but does not create. It may construct well and with a good and faultless workmanship, but its success is formal and not of the spirit, a success of technique and not the embodiment of the imperishable truth of beauty seized in its inner reality.

There have been periods of artistic creation, ages of reason, in which the rational and intellectual tendency has prevailed in poetry and art; there have even been nations which in their great formative periods of art and literature, have set up reason and a meticulous taste as the sovereign powers of their aesthetic activity. At their best they have done work of a certain greatness, but always of an intellectual greatness and perfection of technique rather than achievements of an inspired and revealing beauty; indeed their very aim has been not the discovery of the deeper truth of beauty, but truth of ideas and truth of reason, a critical rather than a true creative aim. Their object has been an intellectual criticism of life and nature rather than a revelation of God and man and life and nature in the forms of artistic beauty. But great art is not satisfied with representing the intellectual truth of things, which is always their superficial or exterior truth; it seeks for their deeper and original truth which escapes the eye of the mere sense or the mere reason, the soul in them, the unseen reality which is not that of their form and process but of their spirit. This it seizes and expresses by form and idea, but a significant form, which is not merely a faithful and just or a harmonious reproduction, and a revelatory idea, not the idea which is merely correct, elegantly right or fully satisfying to the reason and taste. Always the truth it seeks is first and foremost the truth of beauty,—not, again, the formal beauty alone or the beauty of proportion and right process which is what the sense and the reason seek, but the soul of beauty which is hidden from the ordinary eye and the ordinary mind and revealed in its fullness only to the unsealed

vision of the poet and artist in man who can seize the secret significances of the universal poet and artist, the divine creator who dwells as their soul and spirit in the forms he has created.

The art-creation which lays a supreme stress on reason and taste and on perfection and purity of a technique constructed in obedience to the canons of reason and taste, claims for itself the name of classical art; but the claim is of doubtful validity. The spirit of the real, the great classical art and poetry is to bring out what is universal and subordinate individual expression to universal truth and beauty, just as that of romantic art and poetry is to bring out what is striking and individual so powerfully as to throw into the background of its creation the universal, on which yet all true art romantic or classical builds and fills in its forms. In truth, all great art has carried in it both a classical and a romantic as well as a realistic element,—understanding realism in the sense of the prominent bringing out of the external truth of things, not the perverse romanticism which brings into exaggerated prominence the ugly, common or morbid and puts that forward as the whole truth of life. The type of art to which a great creative work belongs is determined by the prominence it gives to one element and the subdual of the others into subordination to its reigning spirit. But classical art also works by a large vision and inspiration, not by the process of the intellect. The lower kind of classical art and literature,—if classical it be and not rather, as it often is, pseudo-classical, intellectually imitative of the external form and process of the classical,—may achieve work of considerable, though a much lesser power, but of the essentially inferior scope and nature to which it is condemned by its principle of intellectual construction. Almost always it speedily degenerates into the formal and academical, empty of real beauty, void of life and power, imprisoned in slavery to

form and imagining that when a certain form has been followed, certain canons of construction satisfied, certain rhetorical rules obeyed, all has been achieved. It ceases to be art and becomes a cold and mechanical workmanship.

This predominance given to reason and taste in the creation and appreciation of beauty arises from a temper of mind which is critical rather than creative ; and in regard to creation it makes a capital error. All artistic work in order to be perfect must indeed have in the very act of creation the guidance of an inner power of discrimination constantly selecting and rejecting in accordance with a principle of truth and beauty which remains always faithful to a harmony, a proportion, an intimate relation of the form to the idea and the idea to the spirit, nature and inner body of the thing of beauty which has been revealed to the soul and the mind, its *svarûpa* and *svabhâva* ; it rejects all that is foreign, superfluous, otiose, a mere diversion distractive and deformative, excessive or defective, while it selects and finds sovereignly all that can bring out the full truth, the utter beauty, the inmost power. But this discrimination is not that of the critical intellect, nor is the harmony, proportion, relation it observes that which can be fixed by any set law of the critical reason ; it exists in the very nature and truth of the thing itself, the creation itself, in its secret inner law of beauty and harmony which can be seized by vision, not by intellectual analysis. And the discrimination which works in the creator, is therefore not an intellectual self-criticism or an obedience to rules imposed on him from outside by any intellectual canons, but itself creative, intuitive, a part of the vision, involved in and inseparable from the act of creation. It comes as part of that influx of power and light from above which by its divine enthusiasm lifts the faculties into their intense suprarational working. When it fails, when it is betrayed by the lower executive instruments rational or infrarational,—and this

happens when these cease to be passive and insist on obtruding their own demands or vagaries,—the work is flawed and a subsequent act of self-criticism becomes necessary. But in correcting his work the artist who attempts to do it by rule and intellectual process, uses a false or at any rate an inferior method and cannot do his best. He has rather to call to his aid the intuitive critical vision and embody it in a fresh act of inspired creation or re-creation after bringing himself back by its means into harmony with the light and law of his original creative initiation. The critical intellect has no part in the means of the inspired creator of beauty.

In the appreciation of beauty it has a part, but it is not even there the supreme judge or lawgiver. The business of the intellect is to analyse the elements, parts, external processes, apparent principles of that which it studies and explain their relations and workings ; in doing this it instructs and enlightens the lower mentality which has, if left to itself, the habit of doing things or seeing what is done and taking all for granted without proper observation and fruitful understanding. But with the highest and deepest truth of beauty as with truth of religion, the intellectual reason cannot seize its inner sense and reality, not even the inner truth of its apparent principles and processes, unless it is aided by a higher insight not its own. As it cannot give a method, process or rule by which beauty can or ought to be created, so also it cannot give to the appreciation of beauty that deeper insight which it needs ; it can only help to remove the dullness and vagueness of the habitual perceptions and conceptions of the lower mind which prevent it from seeing beauty or which give it false and crude aesthetic habits ; it does this by giving to the mind an external idea and rule of the elements of the thing it has to perceive and appreciate. What is farther needed is the awakening of a certain vision, an insight and an intuitive response in the soul. Reason

which studies always from outside, cannot give this inner and more intimate contact ; it has to aid itself by a more direct insight springing from the soul itself and to call at every step on the intuitive mind to fill up the gap of its own deficiencies.

We see this in the history of the development of literary and artistic criticism. In its earliest stages the appreciation of beauty is instinctive, natural, inborn, a response of the aesthetic sensitiveness of the soul which does not attempt to give any account of itself. When the rational intelligence applies itself to this task, it is not satisfied with recording faithfully the nature of the response and the thing it has felt, but it attempts to analyse, to lay down what is necessary in order to create a just aesthetic gratification, it prepares a grammar of technique, an artistic law and canon of construction, a sort of mechanical rule of process for the creation of beauty, a fixed code or Shastra. This brings in the long reign of academic criticism superficial, technical, artificial, governed by the false idea that technique, of which alone critical reason can give an entirely adequate account, is the most important part of creation and that to every art there can correspond an exhaustive science which will tell us how the thing is done and give us the whole secret and process of its doing. A time comes when the creator of beauty revolts and declares the charter of his own freedom, generally in the shape of a new law or principle of creation, and this freedom once vindicated begins to widen itself and to carry with it the critical reason out of all its familiar bounds. A more developed appreciation emerges which begins to seek for new principles of criticism, to search for the soul of the work itself and explain the form in relation to the soul or to study the creator himself or the spirit, nature and ideas of the age he lived in, so to arrive at a right understanding of his work. The intellect has begun to see that its highest business is not to lay down laws for

the creator of beauty, but to help us to understand his work and himself, not only its form and elements but the mind from which it sprang and the impressions its effects create in the mind that receives. Here criticism is on its right road, but on a road to a consummation in which the rational understanding is overpassed.

For the conscious appreciation of beauty reaches its height of enlightenment and enjoyment not by analysis of the beauty enjoyed or even by a right and intelligent understanding of it,—these are only a preliminary clarifying of our first unenlightened sense of the beautiful,—but by an exaltation of the soul in which it opens itself entirely to the light and power and joy of the creation, the soul of beauty in us identifying itself with the soul of beauty in the thing created and feeling in appreciation the same divine intoxication and uplifting which the artist felt in creation. Criticism must reach its highest point where it becomes the record, account, right description of this response; it must become itself inspired, intuitive, revealing. In other words the action of the intuitive mind must complete the action of the rational intelligence and it may even wholly replace it and do more powerfully the peculiar and proper work of the intellect itself; it may explain more intimately to us the secret of the form, the process, the secret of the defects and limitations of the work as well as of its qualities. For the intuitive intelligence when it has been sufficiently trained and developed, can take up always the work of the intellect itself and do it with a power and light greater and surer than the power and light of the reason.

What has been said of great creative art, that being the form in which normally our highest and intensest aesthetic satisfaction is achieved, applies to all beauty, beauty in Nature, beauty in life as well as beauty in art. We find that in the end the place of reason and the limits of its achievement are precisely of the same kind

in regard to beauty as in regard to religion. It helps to enlighten and purify the aesthetic instincts and impulses, but it cannot give them their highest satisfaction or guide them to a complete insight. It shapes and fulfils to a certain extent the aesthetic intelligence, but it cannot justly pretend to give the definitive law for the creation of beauty or for the appreciation and enjoyment of beauty. It can only lead the aesthetic instinct, impulse, intelligence towards their greatest possible conscious satisfaction, but not to it; it has in the end to hand them over to a higher faculty which is in direct touch with the suprarational and in its nature and workings exceeds the intellect.

And for the same reason, because that which we are seeking through beauty is in the end that which we are seeking through religion, the Absolute, the Divine. The search for beauty is only in its beginning a satisfaction in the beauty of form, the beauty which appeals to the physical senses and the vital impressions, impulsions, desires. It is only in the middle a satisfaction in the beauty of the ideas seized, the emotions aroused, the perception of perfect process and harmonious combination. Behind them the soul of beauty in us desires the contact, the revelation, the uplifting delight of an absolute beauty in all things which it feels to be present, but which neither the senses and instincts by themselves can give, though they may be its channels,—for it is suprasensuous,—nor the reason and intelligence, though they too are a channel,—for it is suprarational, supraintellectual,—but to which through all these veils the soul itself seeks to arrive. When it can get the touch of this universal, absolute beauty, this soul of beauty, this sense of its revelation in any slightest or greatest thing, the beauty of a flower, a form, the beauty and power of a character, an action, an event, a human life, an idea, a stroke of the brush or the chisel or a scintillation of the mind, the colours of

a sunset or the grandeur of the tempest, it is then that the sense of beauty in us is really, powerfully, entirely satisfied. It is in truth seeking, as in religion, for the Divine, the All-Beautiful in man, in nature, in life, in thought, in art ; for God is Beauty and Delight hidden in the variation of his masks and forms. When, fulfilled in our growing sense and knowledge of beauty and delight in beauty and our power for beauty, we are able to identify ourselves in soul with this Absolute and Divine in all the forms and activities of the world and shape an image of our inner and our outer life in the highest image we can perceive and embody of the All-beautiful, then the aesthetic being in us which was born for this end, has fulfilled himself and risen to his divine consummation. To find highest beauty is to find God ; to reveal, to embody, to create as we say, highest beauty is to bring out of our souls the living image and power of God.

Hymns of the Atris

HYMN TO VARUNA

[In this hymn there is throughout a sustained double sense. In the exoteric Varuna is hymned as the Asura, omniscient and omnipotent lord and creator, the Godhead in his creative wisdom and might forming the world and maintaining the law of things in the earth and mid-air and heavens. In the esoteric, in which the physical phenomena of the exoteric become symbols, the infinite Godhead is hymned in his all-pervading wisdom and purity opening the three worlds of our being to the Sun of knowledge, pouring down the streams of the Truth, purifying the soul from the falsehood of the lower being and its sin. The hymn is rendered here successively in its exoteric and its esoteric significance.]

(1)

TO THE OMNISCIENT CREATOR

1. Sing thou the word vast and profound and dear to renowned Varuna, the All ruler, to him who clove away, even as the cleaver of beasts a skin, that he might spread out the earth under the sun.

2. He spread out the mid-air on the tree-tops, he put strength in the battle-steeds and milk in the

cows; in hearts he put will, the fire in the waters,¹ the sun in heaven and the Soma-plant on the mountain.

3. Varuna poured forth over earth and heaven and the mid-air the holder of the waters whose windows open downward; by him the King of all the world floods the earth as the rain floods a field of barley.

4. Varuna floods the wide earth and heaven, yea, when he desires the milk of heaven, he pours it forth; the mountains are clothed utterly with cloud, the heroes of storm² put forth their strength and all is cast down before them.

5. I have declared this vast creative wisdom³ of the famous and mighty One, even Varuna, he who stood in mid-air as with a measuring-rod and wide he measured out the earth with the sun.

6. Vast is this wisdom of the divine and the greatest of seers and there is none who can do violence against it; therefore the Ocean is one, yet all these rushing rivers pour themselves into it and cannot fill it.

7. Whatsoever sin we have done against the law of Aryaman or the law of Mitra, against brother or friend, against constant neighbour or enemy,⁴ cast it away from us, O Varuna.

8. The sin we have done like cunning gamesters who break the law of the play, or have done against

1. Savana explains, either the electric fire in the water of the clouds or the submarine fire in the ocean.

2. *I'râh*, the Heroes, here the Maruts as storm-gods.

3. Maya, with a strong sense of its root-significance, to measure, form, build or plan out.

4. Or, stranger.

the truth or what we have sinned in ignorance, all these cleave far from us, O god, like loose-hanging fruits: then shall we be beloved of thee, O Varuna.

(2)

THE MIGHTY MASTER OF INFINITE WISDOM

[The Rishi hymns Varuna as the Lord of infinite purity and wisdom who opens our earthly being to the unclouded light of the sun of knowledge, pours out the waters of the Truth upon all our triple existence mental, vital and physical and by its power removes all sin and evil and falsehood from our lives. He creates the free wideness of our vital being above our broken search for the delightful objects of our desire, sets the plenitude in our battling life-forces, the yield of heaven in the shining herds of thought; he has put will in our hearts, Agni the divine force in the waters of existence, the Sun of divine knowledge in the highest heaven of mind and the plant that yields the wine of delight on the many-plateaued mountain of our being. All these are the means by which we attain to immortality. He plans out all our physical existence by his wisdom according to the truth-light of the sun of knowledge and creates in us the unity of his own infinite existence and consciousness with all the seven rivers of the Truth-plane pouring their streams of knowledge into it without filling its infinity.]

1. To Varuna of the far-heard inspirations, the all-ruling,¹ sing bright the inspired word of the

1. The two epithets are intended to give the two sides of the divine being, all-knowledge and all-power ; *mâyâm açurasya çrutasya*. Man divinising himself has to become in the image of the godhead seer and king.

soul in its vastness and depth and delight; for he has cloven wide away the darkness, as one that cleaves away a skin, that he may spread out our earth under his illumining sun.²

2. He has spread wide the mid-world above the forests of earth-delight;³ he has put his plenitude in our battle-steeds of life⁴ and their heavenly milk in our shining herds of knowledge.⁵ Varuna has put the will⁶ in our hearts, the divine fire⁷ in the waters,⁸ the Sun of Light in our heavens, the plant of Delight on the mountain of our being.⁹

3. Varuna has poured forth over our earth and heaven and mid-world the holder of wisdom with

2. The limitations of the physical mentality are rolled away and it is spread out in a great wideness to receive the revelations and inspirations of the light of the gnosis. 3. The forests or delightful growths of earth (*ṛana* means also pleasure) are the basis of the mid-world, the vital world in us which is the realm of Vayu, the Life-God. That is the world of the satisfaction of desires. This also is spread out in its full wideness, free from limitation, to receive the Ananda or divine delight by means of the knowledge and law of the Truth. 4. *Arvatsu*, meaning both "battlers, strivers" and "horses". 5. *Usriyāsu*, meaning both "bright ones" and "cows". 6. *Kratu*, the will to the divine work, the sacrificial will. 7. Agni, the fire of the divine Will which receives the sacrifice and becomes its priest. 8. The ocean of being or else the waters of Truth which descend from above. 9. Our existence is compared always to a mountain with many plateaus, each a level or plane of being.

his doors opening downward;¹⁰ with him the king of all our being floods our earth like rain flooding the barley.

4. He floods our earth in its wideness and our heaven, yea, Varuna when he desires that milk,¹¹ pours it forth ; the mountains are covered with the cloud, his heroes¹² put forth their strength and cast it away.

5. Vast is this wisdom which I declare of Varuna the far-heard, the mighty Lord. for he stands in our mid-world as with a measuring-rod and wide he measures out our earth with his illumining Sun.¹³

6. Vast is this wisdom of the godhead greatest in seer-knowledge and none can do violence to it ; for into him, the one, the ocean, the bright fostering

10. The gnosis opens upward to receive the Infinite in its will and knowledge ; here its doors open downwards to flood the lower being. 11. The milk of the Cow Aditi, the infinite consciousness. 12. The Maruts as life-powers attaining to full thought-knowledge ; they help Indra to break the cloud or coverer, Vritra, and pour out the waters of Truth and also to bring the light hidden by Vala, that of the hidden sun. Here the two ideas are combined in another image. 13. Man lives in the physical being ; Varuna brings the light of the gnosis into it and measures it out, that is, shapes and plans out our earth-existence in the measures of the Truth by means of the mind enlightened by the sun of gnosis : he takes his stand as the Asura in our vital plane, the link between mental and physical, there to receive the light and pass it on to the earth as a creative and determining force.

rivers¹⁴ pour their waters, yet they cannot fill him.

7. All the sin that we have done against thee in thy power of Aryaman or thy power of Mitra or as brother or friend or the eternal indweller or the warrior,¹⁵ that cast away from us.

8. The sin we have done as cunning gamesters offend in their play, our sin against the truth and our sin by ignorance. all these cleave away like loosened things; then may we be dear to thee, O Varun.

14 The seven rivers that descend from the Truth-plane, here called *aranayah*, which has the same root-sense as *dhenayah*, the fostering cows. 15. Against the Dasyus.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXV

If the military necessity, the pressure of war between nations and the need for prevention of war by the assumption of force and authority in the hands of an international body, be it world-State or League of Peace, is that which is most directly driving humanity towards some sort of international unity, there is behind it another necessity which is much more powerful in its action on the modern mind, the economic, the commercial and industrial. Commercialism is a modern sociological phenomenon ; it is, in fact, almost the whole phenomenon of modern society. The economic part of life is, necessarily, always important to an organised community ; but in former times it was simply the first need, it was not that which occupied the thoughts of men, gave the whole tone to the social life, stood at the head and was clearly recognised as standing at the root of social principles. Ancien régime man was in the group primarily a political being, in the Aristotelian sense,—as soon as he ceased to be primarily religious,—and to this preoccupation he added, wherever he was sufficiently at ease, the preoccupation of thought, art and culture. The economic impulses of the group were worked out as a mechanical necessity, a strong desire in the vital being rather than a leading thought in the mind ; nor was the society regarded or studied as an economical organism except in a very superficial aspect.

The economic man held an honourable, but still a comparatively low position in the society; he was only the third caste or class, the Vaishya : it was the intellectual and political classes,—the Brahmin, thinker, scholar, philosopher and priest, the Kshatriya, ruler and warrior,—who led, and it was their thoughts and preoccupations which gave the tone to society, determined its conscious drift and action, coloured most powerfully all its motives. Commercial interests entered into the relations of states and into the motives of war and peace, but as subordinate and secondary predisposing causes of amity or hostility, and rarely and only as it were accidentally came to be enumerated among the overt and conscious causes of peace, alliance and strife. The political consciousness, the political motive dominated and increase of wealth was primarily regarded as a means of political power and greatness and opulence of the mobilisable resources of the State than as an end in itself or a first consideration.

Everything now is changed. The phenomenon of modern social development is the decline of the Brahmin and Kshatriya, of the Church, the military aristocracy and the aristocracy of letters and culture, and the rise to power or predominance of the commercial and industrial classes, Vaishya and Shudra, capital and labour; having together swallowed up or cast out their rivals they are now engaged in a fratricidal conflict for sole possession in which the completion of the downward force of social gravitation, the ultimate triumph of Labour and the remodelling of all social conceptions and institutions with labour as the first, the most dignified term giving its value to all others seem to be already the visible writing of destiny. At present, however, it is the Vaishya who still predominates and his stamp on the world is commercialism, the predominance of the economical man, the universality of the commercial value or the utilitarian, materially efficient and productive value for everything in

human life, even for knowledge, thought, science, art, poetry and religion, the economical conception of life overriding all others.

For the modern economical view of life culture and its products have chiefly a decorative value ; they are costly and desirable luxuries, not indispensable necessities. Religion is for it a by-product of the human mind with a very restricted utility. Education is indeed of a recognised importance, but its object and form are no longer so much cultural as scientific, utilitarian and economic, its value the preparation of the efficient individual unit to take his place in the body of the organised economical society. Science is of immense importance not because it discovers the secrets of Nature for the advancement of knowledge, but because it utilises them for the creation of machinery and in developing and organising the economical resources of the community. The thought-power of the society, almost its soul-power—if it has any longer so unsubstantial and unproductive a thing as a soul,—is not in its religion or its literature,—though the former drags on a feeble existence and the latter teems and spawns,—but in the daily Press, primarily an instrument of commercialism and governed by the political and commercial spirit and not like literature a direct instrument of culture. Politics, government itself are becoming more and more a machinery for the development of an industrialised society, divided between the service of bourgeois capitalism and the office of a half-involuntary channel for the incoming of economic Socialism. Free thought and culture remain on the surface of this great increasing mass of commercialism influencing and modifying it, but themselves more and more influenced, penetrated, coloured, subjugated by the economic, commercial and industrial view of human life.

This great change has affected profoundly the character of international relations in the past and is likely to

affect them still more openly and powerfully in the future. For there is no apparent probability of a change in a new direction in the immediate future. Certain prophetic voices announce indeed the speedy passing of the age of commercialism. But it is not easy to see how this is to come about; certainly it will not be by a reversion to the predominantly political spirit of the past or the temper and forms of the old type of aristocratic society; the sigh of the extreme conservative mind for the golden age of the past, which was not so golden as it appears to an imaginative eye in the distance, is a vain breath blown to the winds by the rush of the car of the Time-Spirit in the extreme velocity of its progress. The end of commercialism can only come about either by some unexpected development of commercialism itself or through a re-awakening of spirituality in the race and its coming to its own by the subordination to it of the political and economic motives of life.

Certain signs are thought to point in this direction. The religious spirit is reviving and even the old discouraged religious creeds and forms are recovering a kind of vigour; in the secular thought of mankind there are signs of an idealism which increasingly admits a spiritual element among its motives. But all this is as yet slight and superficial; the body of thought and practice, the effective motive, the propelling impulsion remain untouched and unchanged. That impulsion is still towards the industrialising of the human race and the perfection of the life of society as an economic and productive organism; nor is it likely to die as yet by exhaustion, for it has not yet fulfilled itself and is growing, not declining in force. It is aided moreover by modern Socialism which promises to be the master of the future; for Socialism proceeds on the Marxian principle that its own reign has to be preceded by an age of bourgeois capitalism of which it is to be the inheritor and to seize upon its work and organisation in

order to turn it to its own uses and modify it by its own principles and methods. It intends indeed to substitute Labour as the master instead of Capital; but this only means that all activities will be valued by the labour contributed and work produced rather than by the wealth contributed and produced. It will be a change from one side of economism to the other, but not a change from economism to the domination of some other and higher motive of human life. The change itself is likely to be one of the chief factors with which international unification will have to deal and either its greatest aid or its greatest difficulty.

In the past the effect of commercialism has been to bind together the human race into a real economic unity behind its apparent political separativeness. But this was a subconscious unity of inseparable interrelations, of intimate mutual dependence and not either of the spirit or of the conscious organised life. Therefore these interrelations produced at once the necessity of peace and the unavoidability of war. Peace was necessary for their normal action, war frightfully perturbatory to their whole system of being. But because the organised units were politically separate and rival nations, their commercial interrelations became relations of rivalry and strife or rather a confused tangle of exchange and interdependence with hostile separatism. Self-defence against each other by a wall of tariffs, a race for closed markets and fields of exploitation, a struggle for place in markets and fields which could not be monopolised and an attempt at mutual interpenetration in spite of tariff walls have been the chief features of this separatism and this hostility. The outbreak of war under such conditions was only a matter of time; it was bound to come as soon as one nation or else group of nations felt itself either unable to proceed farther by pacific means or threatened with the definite limitation of its expansion by the growing combination of its rivals. The Franco-German was the last great war

dictated by purely political motives. Since then the political motive has been mainly a cover for the commercial. Not the political subjugation of Serbia which could only be a fresh embarrassment to the Austrian empire, but the commercial possession of the outlet through Salonica was the motive of Austrian policy. Pan-Germanism covered the longings of German industry for possession of the great resources and the large outlet into the North Sea offered by the countries along the Rhine ; and to seize African spaces of exploitation and perhaps French coalfields, not to rule over French territory was the drift of its real intention. In Africa, in China, in Persia, in Mesopotamia commercial motives determined political and military action. War is no longer the legitimate child of ambition and earth-hunger, but the bastard offspring of wealth-hunger or commercialism with political ambition as its putative father.

On the other hand the effect, the shock of war have been rendered intolerable by the industrial organisation of human life and the commercial interdependence of the nations. It would be too much to say that it has laid that organisation in ruins, but it has turned it topsy-turvy, deranged its whole system and diverted it to unnatural ends. And it has produced a wide-spread suffering and privation in belligerent and a *gêne* and perturbation of life in neutral countries to which the history of the world offers no parallel. The angry cry that this must not be suffered again and that the authors of this menace and disturbance to the modern industrial organisation of the world; self-styled civilisation, must be visited with condign punishment and remain for some time as international outcastes under a ban and boycott, shows how deeply the lesson has gone home, though it shows also that the real, the inner truth of it all has not yet been understood. Certainly, from this point of view also, the prevention of war must be one of the first preoccupa-

tions of a new ordering of international life ; but how is it to be entirely prevented if the old state of commercial rivalry between politically separate nations is to be perpetuated ? If peace is still to be a covert war, an organisation of strife and rivalry, how is the physical shock to be prevented ? Through the regulation of the inevitable strife and rivalry by a state of law as in the competitive commercial life of a nation before the advent of Socialism ? But that was only possible because the competing individuals or combines were part of a single social organism subject to a single governmental authority. Such a regulation between nations can therefore have no other conclusion, logically or practically, than the formation of a centralised world-State.

But let us suppose that the physical shock of war is prevented, not by law, but by the principle of enforced arbitration in extreme cases which might lead to war, not by the creation of an international authority, but by the overhanging threat of international pressure. The state of covert war will still continue ; it may even take new and disastrous forms. Deprived of other weapons, the nations are bound to have increasing resort to the weapon of commercial pressure, like capital and labour in their chronic state of "pacific" struggle within the limits of the national life. The instruments would be different, but would follow the same principle, that of the strike and the lock-out which are on one side a combined passive resistance by the weaker party to enforce its claims, on the other a passive pressure by the stronger party to enforce its wishes. Between nations, the corresponding weapon to the strike would be a commercial boycott, already used more than once in an unorganised fashion both in Asia and Europe and bound to be extremely effective and telling if organised even by a politically or commercially weak nation,—for the weaker nation is necessary to the stronger, if as nothing else, yet as a

market or as a commercial and industrial victim. The corresponding weapons to the lock-out would be the refusal of capital or machinery, the prohibition of all or of any needed imports into the offending or victim country, or even a naval blockade leading, if long maintained, to industrial ruin or to national starvation. The blockade is a weapon used originally only in a state of war, but it has recently been employed, against Greece, as a substitute for war, and this use may easily be extended in the future. There is always too the weapon of prohibitive tariffs.

It is clear that these weapons need not be employed for commercial purposes or motives only, they may be grasped at to defend or to attack any national interest, to enforce any claim of justice or injustice between nation and nation. It has been shown into how tremendous a weapon commercial pressure can be turned when it is used as an aid to war itself ; if Germany is utterly crushed in the end, the real means of victory will have been the blockade, the cutting off of money, resources and food and the ruin of commerce and industry ; for if any military debacle arrives, it is clear that it will, not be directly due to military weakness, but primarily to the diminution and failure of resources, to exhaustion, semi-starvation or worse and the moral depression of an intolerable position cut off from all hope of replenishment and recovery. This lesson also may have in the future considerable application in a time of "peace." Already it is proposed in some quarters to continue the commercial war after the political has ceased, so that Germany may not only be struck off the list of great imperial nations, but also permanently hampered, disabled or even ruined as a commercial and industrial rival. What unexpected applications may not the future make of such a dangerous example ! what rebound may it not have in quarters in which the possibility of such a recoil seems too remote to be entertained even as a far-off contingency !

It has recently been suggested that the future League of Peace might use this weapon of commercial pressure against any recalcitrant nation in place of military force. But so long as there is not a firm international authority, it would not be likely to be limited to such occasions or used only for just and legitimate ends. It might be used by a strong nation secure of general indifference to crush and violate the weak ; it might be used by a combination of strong imperial powers to enforce their selfish and evil will upon the world. Force and coercion of any kind not concentrated in the hands of a just and impartial authority are always liable to abuse and misapplication. Therefore inevitably in the growing unity of mankind the evolution of such an authority must become an early and pressing need. The world-State even in its early and imperfect organisation must begin not only to concentrate military force in its hands, but to commence consciously in the beginning what the national State only arrived at by a slow and natural development, the ordering of the commercial, industrial, economic life of the race and the control, at first, no doubt, only of the principal relations of international commerce, but inevitably in the end of its whole system and principles. Industry and trade being now five sixths of social life and the economic principle the governing principle of society, a world-State which did not control human life in its chief principle and its largest activity, would exist only in name and not in reality.

The Vedic Fire

(1)

This is the omniscient who knows the law of our being and is sufficient to his works ; let us build the song of his truth by our thought and make it as if a chariot on which he shall mount. When he dwells with us, then a happy wisdom becomes ours. With him for friend we cannot come to harm.

Whosoever makes him his priest of the sacrifice, reaches the perfection that is the fruit of his striving, a home on a height of being where there is no warring and no enemies ; he confirms in himself an ample energy ; he is safe in his strength, evil cannot lay its hand upon him.

This is the fire of our sacrifice ! May we have strength to kindle it to its height, may it perfect our thoughts. In this all that we give must be thrown that it may become a food for the gods ; this shall bring to us the godheads of the infinite consciousness who are our desire.

Let us gather fuel for it, let us prepare for it offerings, let us make ourselves conscious of the jointings of its times and its seasons. It shall so perfect our thoughts that they shall extend our being and create for us a larger life.

This is the guardian of the world and its peoples, the shepherd of all these herds ; all that is born moves by his rays and is compelled by his flame, both the two-footed

and the four-footed creatures. This is the rich and great thought-awakening of the Dawn within.

This is the priest who guides the march of the sacrifice, the first and ancient who calls to the gods and gives the offerings ; his is the command and his the purification ; from his birth he stands in front, the vicar of our sacrifice. He knows all the works of this divine priesthood, for he is the Thinker who increases in us.

The faces of this God are everywhere and he fronts all things perfectly ; he has the eye and the vision : when we see him from afar, yet he seems near to us, so brilliantly he shines across the gulfs. He sees beyond the darkness of our night, for his vision is divine.

O you godheads, let our chariot be always in front, let our clear and strong word overcome all that thinks the falsehood. O you godheads, know for us, know in us that Truth, increase the speech that finds and utters it.

With blows that slay cast from our path, O thou Flame, the powers that stammer in the speech and stumble in the thought, the devourers of our power and our knowledge who leap at us from near and shoot at us from afar. Make the path of the sacrifice a clear and happy journeying.

Thou hast bright red horses for thy wrath, O Will divine, who are driven by the stormwind of thy passion; thou roarest like a bull, thou rushest upon the forests of life, on its pleasant trees that encumber thy path, with the smoke of thy passion in which there is the thought and the sight.

At the noise of thy coming even they that wing in the skies are afraid, when thy eaters of the pasture go abroad in their haste. So thou makest clear thy path to thy kingdom that thy chariots may run towards it easily.

This dread and tumult of thee, is it not the wonderful and exceeding wrath of the gods of the Life rushing down on us to found here the purity of the Infinite, the

harmony of the Lover ? Be gracious, O thou fierce Fire, let their minds be again sweet to us and pleasant.

God art thou of the gods, for thou art the lover and friend ; richest art thou of the masters of the Treasure, the founders of the home, for thou art very bright and pleasant in the pilgrimage and the sacrifice. Very wide and far-extending is the peace of thy beatitudes; may that be the home of our abiding !

That is the bliss of him and the happiness; for then is this Will very gracious and joy-giving when in its own divine house, lit into its high and perfect flame, it is adored by our thoughts and satisfied with the wine of our delight. Then it lavishes its deliciousness, then it returns in treasure and substance all that we have given into its hands.

O thou infinite and indivisible Being, it is thou ever that formest the sinless universalities of the spirit by our sacrifice ; thou compellest and inspirest thy favourites by thy happy and luminous forcefulness, by the fruitful riches of thy joy. Among them may we be numbered. Thou art the knower of felicity and the increaser here of our life and advancer of our being ! Thou art the godhead !

(2)

Burn away from us the sin, flame out on us the bliss.
Burn away from us the sin !

For the perfect path to the happy field, for the exceeding treasure when we would do sacrifice,—burn away from us the sin !

That the happiest of all these many godheads may be born in us, that the seers who see in our thought may multiply,—burn away from us the sin !

That thy seers, O Flame divine, may multiply and we be new-born as thine,— burn away from us the sin !

When the flaming rays of thy might rush abroad

on every side violently,—burn away from us the sin !

O God, thy faces are everywhere ! thou besiegest us on every side with thy being. Burn away from us the sin !

Let thy face front the Enemy wherever he turns ; bear us in thy ship over the dangerous waters. Burn away from us the sin !

As in a ship over the ocean, bear us over into thy felicity. Burn away from us the sin !

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XXXVII

FROM THE UNDIVINE TO THE DIVINE

(2)

We have admitted therefore three propositions about God and the world to which the general reason and consciousness of mankind bear witness, but which they do not ordinarily reconcile, but fall rather into great perplexities of contradiction and denial about them. We have affirmed, first, an omnipresent Divinity pure, perfect and blissful in his being,—not necessarily a personal God, but at any rate an existence, a power, a Self, an Absolute,—without whom, apart from whom nothing could exist, since all exists only by him and in his being. All thinking that is not atheistic or materialistic, has started and must start from this admission. If certain religions seem to suppose an extracosmic Deity who has created a world outside and apart from his own existence, it is only in appearance, in the vulgar and external notion of themselves which they give to the unreflecting mind ; they too when they come to think, to construct a theology, are compelled to admit the omnipresence of God,—for this omnipresence is a necessity, if a real God or Self at all is, a God or Self one and indivisible. Nothing can possibly exist apart from his existence, born from another than he, unsupported by him, unfilled by the breath and power

of his being. Otherwise we have to suppose two Gods, whether an Ormuzd of the good and an Ahriman of the evil or a perfect supracosmic Being and an imperfect cosmic Demiurge, or else have to imagine, what is contrary to reason, that the one Soul and the Power in all are contrary in their nature and separate in their being. Reason tells us, our consciousness feels, that the one pure and absolute Existence exists in all things and beings even as they exist in him and by him, and spiritual experience in its progress confirms these two voices.

But we have affirmed also two propositions which seem to be in disagreement or at least the nodus of whose agreement we do not yet rightly find. We have found only, on one side, that by the supreme consciousness and the supreme power of this omnipresent Divinity in its perfect universal knowledge and divine wisdom all things are perfectly decreed, ordered and governed in their relations and yet, on the other, that the actual relations which we see in our human consciousness are relations of imperfection, of disfiguring limitation, are something that we may call the denial or at least the disfiguring disguise of the Divine. The first of these propositions is really inevitable. It must stand if the omnipresent Divine has anything at all to do with the world he inhabits and with its manifestation, ordering and government.

We may indeed suppose a faineant Deity, like the gods of Epicurus, blissful in himself, observing but careless of the world and its discord and sufferings, or a do-nothing Soul like the Purusha of the Sankhyas who allows Nature to do what she will and is content to reflect all her disorders in his passive and stainless being, or else an inactive Self, the Brahman of the Mayavadins, unconcerned with the works of the cosmic Illusion which has somehow or other, mysteriously, paradoxically originated from him to afflict a world of unreal creatures. But all these are devices of the intellect which fail to go

beyond the apparent dissonances of our twofold experience to their reconciliation and do not solve, but only reaffirm them by a more or less covert dualism and essential division of the Indivisible. They affirm really a dual Godhead, Soul and Nature,—as if Nature, the Power in things, could be anything else than a power of the Soul, the essential Being of things, and therefore its natural result and working,—or an observing Self and a working Godhead,—where again the two must really be one, for the Self of the Godhead must be that one observing Self and no other and the discord or gulf between the Self in knowledge and the same Self in its works remains inexplicable ; or else they affirm a double consciousness of the Brahman, one essential and spiritual in which it is itself, is perfect and absolute, and another mental and dynamic—practical, *vyaahārika*,—in which it becomes not itself and with which it has no concern, though we, poor non-existent creatures of its evil dream, have in it a terrible and insistent concern and are compelled to deal with it as real. But this too is a mystification ; for this other consciousness is also in the end that of the one Self and what exists in it cannot be unrelated to him or he unrelated to it. As it exists by him, so its ordering and relations must also exist by him ; its law must be according to some law of his consciousness and existence, for there is nothing else other than he by which it can be governed. God must be aware of and aware in the world-consciousness which exists in his being and he must be constantly governing and determining its phenomena and operations by the power of his being,—if through nothing else, then through the mere fact of his conscious omnipresence.

Once we admit this government, we must admit its completeness. We cannot suppose that his being and consciousness are infinite and absolute, but his knowledge and will are limited in their possession of things or hampered in their power of working. Nor will it help us to

suppose, either, that he leaves part of the working wholly to something that has come into being in his perfection, but is itself imperfect and the cause of imperfection, whether Nature, a conscious Power of evil or the freedom of the human mind and will. For none of these are in the end quite other than he or independent of his own existence, nature and consciousness. They cannot be held solely responsible for the imperfection of their nature which determines the imperfection of their workings ; for in his being that imperfection has arisen and its works cannot be entirely foreign to his will. What divine omniscience and omnipotence has allowed to arise and work in its omnipresence, its all-existence, that we must consider it to have originated and decreed, since without the fiat of the Being they could not have been, could not remain in existence. The Divine governs the world and there is no other Lord but he ; from that necessity of his original and universal being there can eventually be no escape.

The mere fact of the existence of ignorance, error, limitation, suffering, division and discord in the world is not in itself, as it seems to us at first, a denial, a disproof of the divine being, consciousness, power, knowledge, will, delight ; they only appear to be such when we take them by themselves separately, not when we see them in a complete view of the universe. When we break off a part from the whole, it may seem to us imperfect, ugly, incomprehensible ; but when we see it in relation to the whole, it recovers its harmony, beauty, meaning and use. God is infinite being ; in this infinite being, we find limited being everywhere ; it is the fact from which we seem to start and to which our narrow ego bears constant witness. But in reality we are not limited, we are infinite. We are infinite because our ego is only a face of the universal being and has no separate existence ; we are infinite because our apparent individuality is only a surface movement and behind it our real individuality stretches out to unity with

all things and upward to oneness with the transcendent infinity of the Divine. Thus our ego, which seems to be a limitation of existence, is really a power of infinity, and the boundless multiplicity of Jivas in the world is the most powerful evidence, not at all of the limitation or finiteness of God, but of his illimitable infinity. Their very division, since strive how it may it can never erect itself into a real separateness, is the most wonderful proof of an indivisible unity which division itself cannot divide. Where here, in the world, even in the working of world-existence, is there any denial of God's nature of unity or his indivisible being?

But if there is no real division or limitation of being, there does seem to be a real limitation of consciousness, an ignorance of self, of which all other imperfection is the consequence. Because we identify ourselves with this superficial ego-consciousness which is our first insistent self-experience, we do arrive at a practical division with all its untoward consequences. Let us see however that from the point of view of God's workings this fact of ignorance is itself an operation of knowledge and not of ignorance. It is in itself a superficial movement, for behind it is an indivisible all-consciousness, whose frontal power, called by us ignorance, limits itself to a particular operation of knowledge, a particular mode of consciousness while keeping back all the rest of its knowledge as a force behind, a store of light to draw upon, a secret working which fills up all the deficiencies of the apparent stumbling of the ignorance and prevents it from leading to another result than that which the all-knowledge has decreed. This power is like the power of concentration in our human mentality by which we absorb ourselves in a particular object and in a particular work and seem to use only so much knowledge, only such ideas as are necessary for it, while the rest, which are alien to it or would interfere with its end, we put back or reject; yet in reality all the

time it is the indivisible consciousness which we are that has done the work to be done, seen the thing that has to be seen and not any fragment of consciousness or any exclusive ignorance in us.

This power of concentration is rightly held to be, one of the greatest powers of the human mentality. Equally the power of putting forth what seems to be an exclusive working of limited knowledge, what presents itself to us as ignorance, is one of the greatest powers of the divine consciousness. It is only a supremely self-possessing knowledge which can thus be powerful to limit itself in the act and yet work out perfectly all its intentions through that apparent ignorance. In the universe we see this supremely self-possessing knowledge work through a multitude of ignorances, each striving to act according to its own blindness, yet through them all it constructs and executes its universal harmonies. Nay, the miracle of its omniscience appears most strikingly of all in what we call the action of the inconscient, when through the complete or partial nescience—more thick than our ignorance—of the atom, the plant, the insect, the animal, it arranges perfectly its order of things and guides the instinctive or inconscient impulse to an end possessed by the all-knowledge which is held behind, yet is operative within the instinct or the impetus. We may say then, here too, that this action of the ignorance or nescience is no real ignorance, but the most wonderful power, sign and proof of an omniscient self-knowledge and all-knowledge. If we need any personal and inner witness to this indivisible all-consciousness behind the ignorance,—all Nature is its external proof,—we can get it in that higher state in which we draw back behind our own ignorance into touch with the divine Idea and Will behind. We see then clearly enough that what we thought to have been done by ourselves in our ignorance, was done through that veil by this omniscience, we discover his work and

his purpose in us and we know that not in vain have we worshipped him in faith, not only as the pure and universal Presence, but as the Lord of all beings and all Nature.

As with the cause, so with its consequences. What seems to us incapacity, weakness, impotence, limitation of power, the hampered struggle and fettered labour of our will, is from the point of view of the Divine in his self-workings the just limitation of his omniscient power by the free will of that Power itself so that it shall be in exact correspondence with the work that it has to do, with the balance of the sum of forces in which it is a part and with the larger result of which its own results are an indivisible portion. Behind this limitation of power, is the All-Power; in this limitation that All-Power is at work; through the sum of many limited workings the indivisible Omnipotence executes infallibly and sovereignly its purposes. This power to limit its force and to work through that self-limitation, by what we call labour, struggle, difficulty, by what seems to us a series of failures or half-baulked successes, is not therefore a sign, a proof, a reality of weakness, but a sign, a proof, a reality—the greatest possible—of absolute omnipotence.

So too with suffering; it is a consequence of the limitation of consciousness and force which prevents us from mastering and assimilating the touch of what is to us other-force, so that the delight of the touch cannot be seized and affects us in the form of discomfort or pain, a defect or excess, a discord born of division between our being and this being that meets us. Behind is the All-delight of the universal being which makes its account of the contact, has a delight first in the suffering of it and then in the conquest of the suffering and finally in its transmutation. Nor is this All-delight present in the universal alone, but it is here secret in ourselves, as we discover when we can go back from our outer consciousness into the Divine within us and find that so it is the

psychic being is really dealing even with its most perverse experiences and that there is a divine meaning and use in our most poignant sufferings. Nothing but this All-delight could dare or bear to impose such experiences on itself; nothing else could turn them thus to its own utility. So too nothing but an inalienable harmony of being inherent in a alienable unity of being could throw out so many harshest apparent discords which yet are unable to do anything else but serve, secure, turn into elements of a universal rhythm and harmony. At every turn it is the divine Reality which we discover behind that which we are yet compelled by the nature of the superficial consciousness in which we dwell to call un-divine.

And yet, even when we so regard the universe, we cannot dismiss as entirely false and unreal the values that are given to it by our own limited human consciousness. Grief, pain, suffering, error, falsehood, ignorance, weakness, vileness, incapacity, deviation of will and denial of will, egoism, limitation, division from other beings with whom we should be one, all that makes up evil, are facts of the world-consciousness, not entire fictions and unrealities, although they are facts whose full and true sense or true value is not that which we give to them. Still our sense of them is a part of the true sense, our values of them are necessary to their complete values. Without experience of pain we cannot get all the infinite value of the divine delight of which pain is in travail; all ignorance is a penumbra which environs an orb of knowledge, every error is full of the possibility and the effort at a new discovery of truth; every weakness and failure is a sounding of gulfs of power and potentiality; all division is intended to enrich by its experiences of various sweetness of unification the joy of realised unity. All this imperfection is to us evil, but all evil is in travail of the eternal good; for all is an imperfection which is the

condition of a greater perfection in the manifesting of the hidden divinity.

Such is everywhere the law of the manifestation. True, it is a law of manifestation only and need not have been there if there were no movement of manifestation ; but the manifestation being given the law is necessary. It will not do merely to say that the law and all its circumstances are an unreality created by the mental consciousness, non-existent in God, and to get out of the manifestation into God's pure being is the only wisdom. In a sense they are creations of the mental consciousness, but only secondarily ; really they are, as we have seen, creations of the divine consciousness projecting mind away from its all-knowledge so as to realise these opposite or contrary values of its all-power, all-knowledge, all-delight, all-being and unity. Obviously this action and these fruits of the divine consciousness cannot be a mere mistake of God's without any meaning in the divine wisdom, without any purpose of the divine joy, power and knowledge to justify their existence. Justification there is, even if it reposes for us upon a mystery.

Now if, accepting this law, we say that all things are fixed in their statutory and stationary law of being, man too must be fixed in his imperfections, his ignorance and sin and weakness and vileness and suffering. His perpetual attempt to arise out of them can have no issue in the world itself, in life itself ; its one issue, if there is any, must be by escape out of life, out of the world, out of his human existence and therefore out of its eternally unsatisfactory law of imperfect being either into a heaven of the gods or of God or into the pure ineffability of the Absolute. He can never really deliver out of the ignorance and falsehood the truth and knowledge, out of the evil and ugliness the good and beauty, out of the weakness and vileness the power and glory, out of the grief and suffering the joy and delight which are contained in them and

of which they are the first conditions. He must cut them away from him and with them their balancing opposites, with the ignorance the human knowledge, with the evil the human good, with the weakness the human strength and power, with the suffering the human love and joy ; for these are inseparably entwined together, conjoint dualities, negative pole and positive pole of the same unreality, and since they cannot be elevated and transformed, they must be both abandoned. Humanity must not be fulfilled in divinity ; it must cease, be condemned and rejected. Whether the result will be an individual enjoyment of the absolute divine nature or presence or a Nirvana in the featureless Absolute, is a point on which religions and philosophies differ ; but in either case human existence on earth is taken as condemned to eternal imperfection by the very law of its nature ; it is an eternally and unchangeably undivine manifestation of the Divine. The soul by taking on manhood, by the very fact of birth has fallen from the Divine, has committed an original sin, which it is man's spiritual aim, as soon as he is enlightened, thoroughly and unflinchingly to cancel.

In that case, the only reasonable explanation of such a paradoxical manifestation or creation, is that it is a Lila, a play, an amusement of God, in which he, as it were, pretends to be undivine for the sole pleasure of the presence or else has created the undivine, created ignorance, sin and suffering for the joy of creation or, as some religions curiously suppose, that there may be inferior creatures who will praise and glorify him for his eternal goodness, wisdom, bliss and omnipotence and try feebly to come an inch nearer to the goodness in order to share the bliss on pain of punishment—by some supposed eternal—if, as the vast majority must by their very imperfection, they fail. To the doctrine of such a Lila or such a creation it has been objected that a God, himself all-blissful, who delights in the suffering of creatures or

imposes such suffering on them for the faults of his own imperfect creation, would be no God, but a Demon against whom every noble soul must revolt. Certainly, if human souls are quite different and separate from the Divine, the objection would have force, though even then revolt against the Eternal and All-powerful might be noble but would be obviously vain. But the Indian doctrine of the Lila in its most philosophical form supposes that there is a unity complete or partial between the human soul and the divine ; it is God who manifests himself in humanity, it is God in man who puts on this imperfection, it is God who through humanity bears this suffering; and by this Divine within all humanity will be drawn up into the Divine. The Lila then is indeed a paradox, but it ceases to be cruel or revolting ; we can at most regard it as strange, perverse, inexplicable.

But the paradox loses much of its strangeness if we accept the idea not of fixed grades, but of a progressive ascent, a progressive divine manifestation from the inconscient to the superconscient or all-conscient through the animal and the human consciousness. Imperfection is then a term and a necessary term of the manifestation ; all the divine nature being concealed but present in the inconscient must be gradually delivered out of it and this graduality necessitates in between a partial unfolding ; it demands a mid-stage with gradations above and under it,—precisely such a stage as the mental consciousness of man, part knowledge, part ignorance, leaning on the inconscient, rising to the all-conscious Divine. But a partial unfolding means imperfection and must take as its basis or its support an apparent perversion, a seeming contrary of all that characterises the divine nature, infinity, unity, all-consciousness, all-power, all-harmony, all-delight ; without that perversion imperfection can have no standing-ground, cannot freely manifest. Partial knowledge is imperfect knowledge and imperfect knowledge is to that

extent ignorance, a contrary of the divine Nature, and in its outlook on what is beyond its knowledge, becomes error, a perversion ; so with all the other essential principles of the Divine. As to why the Divine should take delight in such a progressive manifestation, we may call it a mystery. But is it really so much of a mystery ? Is not a play of self-concealing and self-finding one of the most strenuous joys that conscious being can give to itself ? What greater pleasure has man himself than victory which is in its nature the conquest of difficulties, a victory in knowledge, in power, in creation, in delight,—or than union which is in its nature the joy of a meeting with a self from which we were divided ? If we interrogate profoundly enough our own psychology, is it not easy after all to understand the secret of the Lila of the Divine ?


This truth of the progressive manifestation is then the clue we needed for the reconciliation of our three propositions,—the truth of the soul ascending out of the inconscient through plant and animal to man and by man to the Divine. The index of man's general possibility of realising the Divine in himself is, as we have often had to say, first that consciousness of his imperfection which he alone of earthly beings possesses and, secondly, his eternal hope of victory and perfection. If all were a blind play of Nature or capricious Lila of some wanton or blundering Deity, these things might have no meaning, they might be accidents, errors or lures of Nature and our conclusion would not follow ; but since we find that the divine Wisdom has ordered all things and is present in every least movement, this undying hope must have infallibly a sense, a justification, a fulfilment. But here the oft-repeated question arises whether its purpose is for the highest sort of man to evolve, to shape out of himself a divine man or superman and then for the race to perish or sink back into an animal inferiority, or whether it is not rather a general transformation or

ascent of all the individuals of the race.

In support of the first view we must acknowledge that the impulse to perfect self-transcendence, the knowledge of the inner divinity and the aspiration to the divine nature are not conscious in all the individuals of the race. It is the hard-earned privilege of the few, the best ; it is not born with man, but born in him, is indeed the first light of his new birth, the mark of the twice-born ; it is not the beginning, but a very advanced stage of man's evolution. He looks downward first to the animal ; afterwards he looks upward to the Godhead. But on the other hand the sign of the divine nature is not only the illumination of the Truth and the glory of the Power and the ecstasy of the Bliss, but the throb of a divine and universal love which desires always to communicate its riches and, when it reaches its height, cannot tolerate that even one human being should remain unsaved, satisfied with his crude humanity, much less sink back to the animal. The divine man not only transcends himself in unity with the Divine, but extends himself into unity with his fellow beings, and the outward sign and effect of that unity is this that as he has remade himself in the divine image, so he remakes other men in his own image which is that of the divine. That would seem to be in this matter the key to the will of the Supreme in humanity, the indication that it is a general will for the race, not a specialisation of some for a new creature and a new creation.

But again another oft-repeated question, — since this ascent is admittedly from plane to plane of our being, does it culminate by the abandonment all the lower planes, or rather does it not include all the lower planes, the divine not only ascending from them but embracing and returning upon them, down to earth and body and matter, our lowest, our footing and foundation ? In the first case the evolution begins here, but is fulfilled elsewhere ; in the second the material plane is the scene of

the divine victory. It would surely seem that as all the difficulties that are to be conquered are laid down here, here also should be their solution, that where the battle takes place, there should be the victory. Otherwise is the victory real? The whole evolution up to man takes place here; his own evolution takes place here; why not then the fulfilment of his evolution? But this answer only creates a strong probability and is not absolutely conclusive. We have to reply then, first, that part of the eternal hope of mankind is the longing for the perfectibility of the human race upon earth and there is no reason to suppose that this part alone of the divine idea in his aspiration is a mistake; secondly, that the nature of the evolution, the ascent confirms our hope. For, if we examine the evolution, we shall see that it is a triple movement, a self-enlargement and a self-transcendence, but also a transformation of what is transcended. We must glance at this triple character of the evolution and see where it leads us.



Essays on the Gita

THE DIVINE BIRTH AND DIVINE WORKS

(1)

In speaking of this Yoga in which action and knowledge become one, the Yoga of the sacrifice of works with knowledge,—works fulfilled in knowledge, knowledge supporting works,—offered to the Purushottama, the supreme Divinity who becomes manifest within us as Narayana, Lord of all our being and action seated secret in our hearts for ever, who becomes manifest even in the human form as the Avatar, the divine birth taking possession of our humanity, Krishna has declared in passing that this was the ancient and original Yoga which he gave to Vivasvan, the Sun-God, Vivasvan to Manu, the first man, Manu to Ikshvaku, and so it came down from royal sage to royal sage till it was lost in the great lapse of Time and is now renewed for Arjuna, because he is the lover and devotee, friend and comrade of the Avatar. For this, he says, is the highest secret,—thus claiming for it a superiority to all other forms of Yoga, because those others lead to the impersonal Brahman or to a personal Deity, to a liberation in actionless knowledge or a liberation in absorbed beatitude, but this gives the highest secret and the whole secret ; it leads to divine peace and divine works, to divine knowledge, action and ecstasy unified in a perfect freedom ; it unites into itself all the Yogic paths as the highest being of the Divine reconciles

and makes one in itself all the different and even contrary powers and principles of its manifested being. Therefore this Yoga of the Gita is not, as some contend, only the Karmayoga, one and the lowest, according to them, of the three paths, but a highest Yoga synthetic and integral directing Godward all the powers of our being.

Arjuna takes the declaration about the transmission of the Yoga in its most physical sense,—there is another significance in which it can be taken,—and asks how the Sun-God, one of the first-born of beings, ancestor of the Solar dynasty, can have received the Yoga from the man Krishna who is only now born into the world. Krishna does not reply, as we might have expected him to have done, that it was as the Divine who is the source of all knowledge that he gave the Word to the Deva who is his form of knowledge, giver of all inner and outer light,—*savitur devasya yo no dhiya' prachodayât*; he accepts instead the opportunity which Arjuna gives him of declaring his concealed Godhead, a declaration for which he had prepared when he gave himself as the divine example for the worker who is not bound by his works, but which he has not yet explicitly made. He now openly announces himself as the incarnate Godhead, the Avatar.

We have had occasion already, when speaking of the divine Teacher, to state briefly the doctrine of Avatarhood as it appears to us in the light of Vedanta, the light in which the Gita presents it to us. We must now look a little more closely at this Avatarhood and at the significance of the divine Birth of which it is the outward expression; for that is a link of considerable importance in the integral teaching of the Gita. And we may first translate the words of the Teacher himself in which the nature and purpose of Avatarhood are given summarily and remind ourselves also of other passages or references which bear upon it. "Many are my lives that are past, and thine also, O Arjuna; all of them I know, but thou knowest

not, O scourge of the foe. Though I am the unborn, though I am imperishable in my self-existence, though I am the Lord of all existences, yet I stand upon my own Nature and come into birth by my self-Maya. For whensoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of the Right I am born from age to age. He who knoweth thus in its right principles my divine birth and my divine work, when he abandons his body, comes not to rebirth, he comes to Me, O Arjuna. Delivered from liking and fear and wrath, full of me, taking refuge in me, many purified by austerity of knowledge have arrived at my nature of being (*madbhâtvanu*, the divine nature of the Purushottama). As men approach me, so I accept them to my love (*bhajāmi*); men follow in every way my path, O son of Pritha."

But most men, the Gita goes on to say, desiring the fulfilment of their works, sacrifice to the gods, to various forms and personalities of the one Godhead, because the fulfilment (*siddhi*) that is born of works,—of works without knowledge,—is swift and easy in the human world; it belongs indeed to that world alone. The other, the divine self-fulfilment in man by the sacrifice with knowledge to the supreme Godhead, is more difficult; its results belong to a higher plane of existence and are less easily grasped. Men therefore follow the fourfold law of their nature and works and on this plane of mundane action they seek the Godhead through his various qualities. But, says Krishna, though I am the doer of the fourfold works and creator of its fourfold law, yet I must be known also as the non-doer, the imperishable, the immutable Self. "Works affect me not, nor have I desire for the fruit of works," for God is the impersonal beyond this egoistic personality and this strife of the modes of Nature, and as the Purushottama also, the impersonal Perso-

nality, he possesses this supreme freedom even in works. Therefore the doer of divine works even while following the fourfold law has to know and live in that which is beyond, in the impersonal self and so in the supreme Godhead. "He who thus knows me is not bound by his works. So knowing was work done by the men of old who sought liberation ; do therefore, thou also, work of that more ancient kind done by ancient men."

The second portion of these passages which has here been given in substance, explains the nature of divine works, *divyam karma*, with the principle of which we have had to deal in the last essay ; the first, which has been fully translated, explains the way of the divine birth, *divyam janma*, the Avatarhood. But we have to remark carefully that the upholding of Dharma in the world is not the only object of the descent of the Avatar, that great mystery of the Divine manifest in humanity ; for the upholding of the Dharma is not an all-sufficient object in itself, not the supreme possible aim for the manifestation of a Christ, a Krishna, a Buddha, but is only the general condition of a higher aim and a more supreme and divine utility. For there are two aspects of the divine birth ; one is a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, the eternal Avatar ; the other is an ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness, *madbhâvam âgatah* ; it is the being born anew in a second birth of the soul. It is that new birth which Avatarhood and the upholding of the Dharma are intended to serve. This double aspect in the Gita's doctrine of Avatarhood is apt to be missed by the cursory reader satisfied, as most are, with catching a superficial view of its profound teachings, and it is missed too by the formal commentator petrified in the rigidity of the schools. Yet it is necessary, surely, to the whole meaning of the doctrine. Otherwise the Avatar idea would be only a dogma,

a popular superstition, or an imaginative or mystic deification of historical or legendary supermen, not what the Gita makes all its teaching, a deep philosophical and religious truth and an essential part of or step to the supreme mystery of all, *rahasyam uttamam*.

If there were not this rising of man into the God-head to be helped by the descent of God into humanity, Avatarhood for the sake of the Dharma would be an otiose phenomenon, since mere Right, mere justice or standards of virtue can always be upheld by the divine omnipotence through its ordinary means, by great men or great movements, by the life and work of sages and kings and religious teachers, without any actual incarnation. The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the divine. The law, the Dharma which the Avatar establishes is given for that purpose chiefly ; the Christ, Krishna, Buddha stands in its centre as the gate, he makes through himself the way men shall follow. That is why each Incarnation holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate ; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being, declares that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one, that Krishna in the human body, *mānshīm tanum ācṛitam*, and the supreme Lord and Friend of all creatures are but two revelations of the same divine Purushottama, revealed there in his own being, revealed here in the type of humanity.

That the Gita contains as its kernel this second and real object of the Avatarhood, is evident from this passage itself, but it becomes clearer if we take it, not by itself,—always the wrong way to deal with the texts of the Gita,—

but in connection with other passages and with the whole teaching. We have to remember and take together its doctrine of the one Self in all, of the Godhead seated in the heart of every creature, its teaching about the relations between the Creator and his creation, its strongly emphasised idea of the *vibhūti*,—noting too the language in which the Teacher gives his own divine example of selfless works which applies equally to the human Krishna and the divine Lord of the worlds, and giving their due weight to such passages as that in the ninth chapter "Deluded minds despise me lodged in the human body because they know not my supreme nature of being, Lord of all existences"; and we have to read in the light of these ideas this passage we find before us and its declaration that by the knowledge of his divine birth and divine works man comes to the Divine and by becoming full of him and even as he and taking refuge in him they arrive at his nature and status of being, *mad-bhāvam*. For then we shall understand the divine birth and its object, not as an isolated and miraculous phenomenon, but in its proper place in the whole scheme of the world-manifestation; without that we cannot arrive at its divine mystery, but shall either scout it altogether or accept it ignorantly and, it may be, superstitiously or fall into the petty and superficial ideas of the modern mind about it by which it loses all its inner and helpful significance.

For to the modern mind Avatarhood is one of the most difficult to accept or to understand of all the ideas that are streaming in from the East upon the rationalised human consciousness. It is apt to take it at the best for a mere figure for some high manifestation of human power, character, genius, great work done for the world or in the world, and at the worst to regard it as a superstition,—to the heathen a foolishness and to the Greeks a stupefying block. The materialist, necessarily, cannot even

look at it, since he does not believe in God ; to the rationalist or the Deist it is a folly and a thing of derision ; to the thoroughgoing dualist who sees an unbridgeable gulf between the human and the divine nature, it sounds like a blasphemy. The rationalist objects that if God exists, he is extracosmic or supracosmic and does not intervene in the affairs of the world, but allows them to be governed by a fixed machinery of law,—he is, in fact, a sort of far-off constitutional monarch or spiritual King Log, at the best an indifferent inactive Spirit behind the activity of Nature, like some generalised or abstract witness Purusha of the Sankhyas ; he is pure Spirit and cannot put on a body, infinite and cannot be finite as the human being is finite, the ever unborn creator and cannot be the creature born into the world,—these things are impossible even to his absolute omnipotence. To these objections the thoroughgoing dualist would add that God is in his person, his rôle and his nature different and separate from man ; the perfect cannot put on human imperfection ; the unborn personal God cannot be born as a human personality ; the Ruler of the worlds cannot be limited in a nature-bound human action and in a perishable human body. These objections, so formidable at first sight to the reason, seem to have been present to the mind of the Teacher in the Gita when he says that although the Divine is unborn, imperishable in his self-existence, the Lord of all beings, yet he assumes birth by a supreme resort to the action of his Nature and by force of his self-Maya ; that he whom the deluded despise because lodged in a human body, is verily in his supreme being the lord of all ; that he is in the action of the divine consciousness the creator of the fourfold Law and the doer of the works of the world and in the silence of the divine consciousness at the same time the impartial witness of the works of his own Nature,—for he is always, beyond both the silence and the action, the supreme Purushottama. And the Gita is able to meet

all these oppositions, to reconcile all these contraries because it starts from the Vedantic view of existence, of God and the universe.

For in the Vedantic view of things all these apparently formidable objections are null and void from the beginning. The idea of the Avatar is not indeed indispensable to its scheme, but it comes in naturally into it as a perfectly rational and logical conception. For all here is God, is the Spirit or Self-existence, is Brahman, *ekamevâdvitīyam*,—there is nothing else, nothing other and different from it and there can be nothing else, can be nothing other and different from it ; Nature is and can be nothing else than a power of the divine consciousness ; all beings are and can be nothing else than inner and outer, subjective and objective soul-forms and bodily forms of the divine being which exist in or result from the power of its consciousness. Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothing else but that ; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the Spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or a body, all here is nothing but that, the world exists only by that connection, that assumption. Far from the world being a mechanism of law with no soul or spirit intervening in the movement of its forces of the action of its minds and bodies,—only some original indifferent Spirit passively existing somewhere outside or above it,—the whole world and every particle of it is on the contrary nothing but the divine force in action and that divine force determines and governs its every movement, inhabits its every form, possesses here every soul and mind ; all is in God and in him moves and has its being, in all he is, acts and displays his being ; every creature is the disguised Narayan.

Far from the unborn being unable to assume birth, all

beings are even in their individuality unborn spirits, eternal without beginning or end, and in their reality and their universality all are the one unborn Spirit of whom birth and death are only a phenomenon of the assumption and change of forms. The assumption of imperfection by the perfect is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe ; but the imperfection appears in the form and action of the mind or body assumed, subsists in the phenomenon,—in that which assumes it, there is no imperfection, even as in the Sun which illumines all there is no defect of light or of vision, but only in the capacities of the individual organ of vision. Nor does God rule the world from some remote heaven, but by his intimate omnipresence ; each finite working of force is an act of infinite Force and not of a limited separate self-existent energy labouring in its own underived strength ; every finite working of will and knowledge is an act of the infinite all-will and all-knowledge. God's rule is not an absentee, foreign and external government ; he governs all because he exceeds all, but also because he dwells within all movements and is their absolute soul and spirit. Therefore none of the objections opposed by our reason to the possibility of Avatarhood can stand in their principle ; for the principle is a vain division made by the intellectual reason which the whole phenomenon and the whole reality of the world are busy every moment contradicting and disproving.

But still, apart from the possibility, there is the question of the actual divine working,—whether actually the divine consciousness does come forward from beyond the veil and act directly in the phenomenal, the finite, the mental and material, the limited, the imperfect. The finite is indeed nothing but a definition, a face-value of the Infinite's self-representations to its own variations of consciousness ; the real value of each finite phenomenon is an infinite value, is indeed the very Infinite. Each being is infinite in its self-existence, whatever it may be in the

action of its phenomenal nature, its temporal self-representation. The man is not, when we look closely, himself alone, a rigidly separate self-existent individual, but humanity in a mind and body of itself ; and humanity too is no rigidly separate self-existent species or genus, it is the All-existence, the universal Godhead figuring itself in the type of humanity ; there it works out certain possibilities, develops, evolves, as we now say, certain powers of its manifestation. What it evolves, is itself, is the Spirit.

For what we mean by Spirit is self-existent being with an infinite power of consciousness and unconditioned delight in its being ; it is either that or nothing, or at least nothing which has anything to do with man and the world or with which, therefore, man or the world has anything to do. Matter, body is only a massed motion of force of conscious being employed as a starting-point for the variable relations of consciousness working through its power of sense ; nor is Matter anywhere really void of consciousness, for even in the atom, the cell there is, as is now made abundantly clear by modern Science, a power of will, an intelligence at work : but that power is the power of will and intelligence of the Self, Spirit or Godhead within it, it is not the separate, self-derived will or idea of the mechanical cell or atom. This universal will and intelligence, involved, develops its powers from form to form, and on earth at least it is in man that it draws nearest to the full divine and there first becomes, even in the form, conscious of its divinity. But still there too there is a limitation, there is that imperfection of the manifestation which prevents the lower forms from having the self-knowledge of their identity with the Divine. For in each limited being the limitation of the phenomenal action is accompanied by a limitation also of the phenomenal consciousness which defines the nature of the being and makes the inner difference between creature and creature. The Divine

works behind governing its special manifestation through this outer and imperfect consciousness and will, itself secret in the cavern, *guhâyâm*, as the Veda puts it, or as the Gita expresses it, "In the heart of all existences the Lord abides turning all existences as if mounted on a machine by Maya". This secret working, the Lord hidden in the heart from the egoistic nature-consciousness through which he works, is God's universal method with creatures. Why then should we suppose that in any form he comes forward into the frontal, the phenomenal consciousness for a more direct and consciously divine action? Obviously, to break the veil between himself and humanity which man in his own nature could never lift.

The Gita explains the ordinary imperfect action of the creature by its subjection to the mechanism of Prakriti and its limitation by the self-representations of Maya. These two terms are only complementary aspects of one and the same effective force of divine consciousness. Maya is not essentially illusion,—the element or appearance of illusion only enters in by the ignorance of the lower Prakriti, Maya of the three modes of Nature,—it is the divine consciousness in its power of various self-representation of its being, while Prakriti is the effective force of that consciousness which operates to work out such self-representation according to its own law and fundamental idea, *svabhava* and *swadharma*, in its own proper quality and particular force of working, *gunakarma*. "Leaning upon my own Nature (Prakriti) I create (loose forth into various being) all this multitude of existences, all helplessly subject to the control of Nature." Those who know not the Divine lodged in the human body, are ignorant of it because they are grossly subject to this mechanism of Prakriti and dwell in an Asuric nature that deludes with desire and bewilders with egoism the will and the intelligence, *mohinîm prakritim âcritâh*. For the Purushottama within is not manifest to every being; he

conceals himself, utterly he envelops himself in his Yogamâyâ.* "All this world" says the Gita "because it is bewildered by the three states of being determined by the modes of Nature, fails to recognise me; for this my divine Maya of the modes of Nature is hard to get beyond; those cross beyond it who approach Me; but those who dwell in the Asuric nature of being, have their knowledge reft from them by Maya." In other words, there is the inherent consciousness of the Divine in all, for in all the Divine dwells; but he dwells there covered by his Maya and the essential self-knowledge of beings is reft from them, turned into the error of egoism by the action of Maya, the action of the mechanism of Prakriti. Still by drawing back from the mechanism of Nature to her inner and secret Master man can become conscious of the indwelling Divinity.

Now it is notable that with a slight but important variation of language the Gita describes in the same way both the action of the Divine in bringing about the ordinary birth of creatures and his action in his birth as the Avatar. "Leaning upon my own Nature, *prakṛitim svām avashtabhyā*," it will say later "I loose forth variously, *visrijāmi*, this multitude of creatures helplessly subject owing to the control of Prakriti, *avaçam prakṛiter vaçāt*." "Standing upon my own Nature" it says here "I am born by my self-Maya, *prakṛitim svām adhiṣṭhāya ... ātmamāyayā*, I loose forth myself, *atmānam srijāmi*." The action implied in the word *avashtabhyā* is a forceful downward pressure by which the object controlled is overcome, oppressed, blocked or limited in its movement or working and becomes helplessly subject to the controlling power, *avaçam vaçāt*; Nature in this action becomes mechanical and its multitude of creatures are held helpless in the

* *Nāham prakāṣaḥ sarvasya ugaṁāṇa-samūritāḥ.*

mechanism, not lords of their own action. On the contrary the action implied in the word *adhiṣṭhāya*, is a dwelling in, but also a standing upon and over the Nature, a conscious control and government by the indwelling Godhead, *adhiṣṭātri devatā*, in which the Puruṣha is not driven by the Prakṛiti through ignorance, but rather the Prakṛiti is full of the light and the will of the Puruṣha. Therefore in the normal birth that which is loosed forth,—created, as we say,—is the multitude of creatures or becomings, *bhūtagrāmam* ; in the divine birth that which is loosed forth, self-created, is the self-conscious self-existent being, *atmānam* ; for the Vedantic distinction between *atmā* and *bhūtaṇi* is that which is made in European philosophy between the Being and its becomings. In both cases Maya is the means of the creation or manifestation, but in the divine birth it is by self-Maya, *ātma-māyavā*, not the involution in the lower Maya of the ignorance, but the conscious action of the self-existent Godhead in its phenomenal self-representation, well aware of its operation and its purpose,—that which the Gita calls elsewhere *Yogamāyā*. In the ordinary birth *Yogamāyā* is used by the Divine to envelop and conceal itself from the lower consciousness, so it becomes for us the means of the Ignorance, *Avidyāmāyā* ; but it is by this same *Yogamāyā* that self-knowledge also is made manifest in the return of our consciousness to the divine, it is the means of the knowledge, *Vidyāmāyā* ; and in the divine birth it so operates—as the knowledge controlling and enlightening the works which are ordinarily done in the Ignorance.

The language of the Gita shows therefore that the divine birth is that of the conscious Godhead in our humanity and essentially the opposite of the ordinary birth even though the same means are used, because it is not the birth into the Ignorance, but the birth of the knowledge, not a physical phenomenon, but a soul-birth. It is the

Soul's coming into birth as the self-existent Being controlling consciously its becoming, not lost to self-knowledge in the cloud of the ignorance. It is the Soul born into the body as lord of Nature, standing above and operating in her freely by its will, not entangled and helplessly driven round and round in the mechanism ; for it works in the knowledge and not, as most do, in the ignorance. It is the secret Soul in all coming forward from its governing secrecy behind the veil to possess wholly in a human type, but as the Divine, the birth which ordinarily it possesses from behind the veil as the Ishwara, but in front is rather possessed by it because there it is the partially-conscious being, the Jiva lost to self-knowledge and bound in its works through subjection to Nature. The Avatar * therefore is the direct manifestation in humanity by Krishna the divine Soul of that divine condition of being to which Arjuna, the human soul, the type of a highest human being, a Vibhuti, is called upon by the Teacher to arise, by climbing out of the ignorance and limitation of his ordinary humanity. It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below, the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal creatures must climb, the attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence.

* The word Avatara means a descent : it is a coming down of the Divine below the line which divides the divine from the human world or status.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XXXV

THE CONDITIONS OF GNOSIS

Knowledge is the first principle of the Vijnana, but knowledge is not its only power ; like every other plane of being it founds itself upon that particular principle which is naturally the key of all its motions, but it also takes up all the powers of being and moulds and modifies their nature and working into conformity with its own original and dominant law. In the mental being, for example, mind-sense or intelligence is the original and dominant principle. The mental being is in his central and determining nature intelligence ; a centre of intelligence, a massed movement of intelligence, a receptive and radiating action of intelligence. He has the intelligent sense of his own being, the intelligent sense of other existence than his own, the intelligent sense of his own nature and activities and the activities of others, the intelligent sense of the nature of things and persons and their relations with himself and each other. That makes up his experience of existence. He has no other knowledge of existence, no knowledge of life and matter except as they make themselves sensible to him and capable of being seized by his intelligence ; what he does not sense and conceive, is to him practically non-existent. Man is a mental being, but one cased in Matter and so has to

start with the action of the physical senses which are all channels of material contact, he does not start with the mind-sense ; but even so he does not and cannot make use of anything conveyed by these physical organs until and unless they are taken hold of by the mind-sense and turned into stuff and value of his intelligent being. What in the lower world is a pranic, a nervous, a dynamic action and reaction, becomes in him sense of force, sense of desire, sense of will, sense of intelligent will-action or mentally conscious sense of force-action. His delight of being translates itself into sense of pleasure and its perversion pain, feeling-sensation of liking and disliking, intelligence of delight and failure of delight,—all phenomena of the mind-sense. That which is above him and around him, that in which he lives,—God, the universal being,—are non-existent and unreal to him until he gets the mental sense of the Infinite and an intelligent consciousness of the superself.

So the *vijñānamaya* being is in its nature truth-consciousness, a centre and circumference of the truth-vision of things, a massed movement or subtle body of gnosis, a receptive and radiating action of the truth-power of things according to the inner law of their being. This truth of things at which we arrive in the gnosis,—for from that it itself originally starts,—is a truth of unity, of oneness, unity originating diversity, unity in multiplicity, but still unity always, an indefeasible oneness. Therefore state of gnosis, the condition of *vijñānamaya* being, implies a self-identification of ourselves with all-existence and with all existences, a universal pervasiveness, a universal comprehension. The *vijñānamaya* Purusha has normally the consciousness of being infinite, normally also the consciousness of containing the world in itself ; it is not like the mental being normally bound to the consciousness of being contained in the world. Therefore the deliverance from ego is the first elementary step towards the being of

the gnosis ; so long as we live at all in the ego, it is idle to hope for this higher reality. The least reversion to ego-thought, ego-action, ego-will brings back the consciousness tumbling out of such gnostic Truth as it has attained into the falsehoods of the divided mind. A secure universality of being is the very basis of this higher consciousness ; we have to feel ourselves one with all things and beings, to identify ourselves with them, to become aware of them as ourselves, their being as our own, their consciousness as our own, their energy as our own. We have to learn how to be one self with all.

This universality is impossible to achieve in its completeness so long as we feel ourselves to be a consciousness lodged in this individual mind, life and body. There has to be a certain elevation of the Purusha out of the physical and even the mental into the *vijnānamaya* body. Neither the brain or its corresponding mental "lotus" can remain the centre of our thinking, nor the heart or its corresponding "lotus" can remain the centre of our sensational being. The conscious centre of being, thought and action rises out of the body and mind and takes its free station above them. We have no longer the sensation of living in the body, but of being above it as its lord, possessor or Ishwara and of encompassing it with a wider than the physical consciousness. We come to realise with a very living force of reality, normal and continuous, what the sages meant when they spoke of the soul carrying the body and said too that the soul is not in the body, but the body in the soul. From above and not from the brain we ideate, we will, the brain-action being only a response and movement of the physical machinery to the shock of the thought-force and will-force from above ; from above all is originated ; above, all that corresponds in gnosis to our present mental activity, takes place.

But this centre, this action is free, not bound, especially not involved in body or shut up in separate indivi-

duality. For we have a consciousness as it were diffused and extending everywhere and the centre is a mere convenience for individual action. The real nature of our conscious activities is universal, one with those of the universal being, proceeding from universality to a supple and variable individualisation. It is the awareness of an infinite being acting universally though with emphasis on an individual formation of its energies ; it is not what we now understand by individuality. This state of consciousness is so abnormal to our present mode of being that to the rational man it may seem impossible or even a state of alienation ; but even for the mental intelligence it vindicates itself by its greater calm, freedom, light, power, effectivity of will, verifiable truth of ideation. For it begins even on the higher levels of liberated mind, but rises to perfect self-possession only in the gnosis.

The infinite has to become to us the primal, the actual reality ; it has to become impossible for us to think of or realise the finite apart from our fundamental sense of the infinite, in which alone the finite can live, can form itself, can have any reality. So long as the finite is to our consciousness the first fact, the foundation of all our thinking, feeling and willing, the normal reality from which we can rise occasionally or frequently to an idea and sense of the infinite, we are very far from the gnosis. The infinite on the contrary has to be our normal consciousness of being, its first fact, the foundation from which everything finite forms itself, the origination of all our thought, will and delight. But this infinite is not only an infinite of pervasion or extension in which everything forms and happens ; behind that the *vijnānamaya* is always aware of a spaceless infinite, the essential being of Sachchidananda and the highest self of our being. This infinite we may first feel as an infinity above us to which we attempt to rise and an infinity around us into which we strive to dissolve our separate existence ; afterwards we

must rise into it, break out of the ego into its largeness, and then that also can take increasing possession of our lower being until it refashions even our lowest and perversest activities into the truth of the Vijnana.

This is the basis and when it is achieved, then only can we progress to the normality of the supramental ideation ; for that is the play of the supreme light and, though we may receive or reflect it even before we rise into the gnosis, we cannot command or wholly possess it until we become the being of the supreme light, until our consciousness is transformed into that consciousness ; for according to the nature of our consciousness will be the normal strain of our ideation. This ideation of the gnosis has already been described ; but it has to be emphasised that it is not confined to a higher thought or the action of a sort of divine reason. It takes up all our present means of knowledge immensely extended, active and effective where they are now debarred, blind, infructuous, and turns them into a high and intense perceptive activity of the Vijnana. Thus it takes up our sense action and illumines it even in its ordinary field so that we get a true sense of things ; but it also enables the mind-sense to have a direct perception of the inner as well as the outer phenomenon, to feel and receive or perceive, for instance, the thoughts, feelings, sensations, the nervous reactions of the object on which it is turned.* It uses also the subtle senses as well as the physical and saves them from their errors ; it gives us the knowledge, the experience of planes of existence other than the material to which our ordinary mentality is ignorantly attached and it enlarges the world for us. It transforms similarly the sensations and gives them their full intensity as well as their full holding-power ; for in our normal mentality the full intensity is impos-

* This power, says Patanjali, comes by "*Sanyama*" on an object ; that is for the mentality ; in the gnosis there is no need of *Sanyama* ; it is the natural action of the Vijnana.

sible because the power to hold and sustain vibrations beyond a certain point is denied to it, mind and body would both break under the shock or the prolonged strain. It takes up too the element of knowledge in our feelings and emotions,—for our feelings too contain a power of knowledge and a power of effectuation which we do not recognise and do not properly develop,—and delivers them at the same time from their limitations and from their errors and perversions. For in all things the gnosis is the Truth, the Right, the highest Law, *devānām adabdhāni vratāni*.

Knowledge and Force or Will—for all conscious force is will,—are the twin sides of the action of consciousness. In our mentality they are divided. The idea comes first, the will comes stumbling after it or rebels against it or is used as its imperfect tool with imperfect results; or else the will starts up first with a blind or half-seeing idea in it and works out something in confusion of which we get the right understanding afterwards. There is no oneness, no full understanding between them; or else there is no perfect correspondence of initiation with effectuation. Nor is the individual will in harmony with the universal; it tries to reach beyond it or falls short of it or deviates from and strives against it. It knows not the times and seasons of the Truth, nor its degrees and measures. The Vijnana takes up the will and puts it first into harmony and then into oneness with the truth of the supramental knowledge. In this knowledge the idea in the individual is one with the idea in the universal, because both are brought back to the truth of the supreme knowledge and will. The gnosis takes up not only our intelligent will, but our wishes, desires, even what we call the lower desires, the instincts, the impulses, the reachings out of sense and sensation and it transforms them. They cease to be wishes and desires, because they cease first to be personal and then cease to be that struggling after the

ungrasped which we mean by craving and desire ; they are no longer blind or half-blind reachings out of the instinctive or intelligent mentality, but are transformed into a various action of the Truth-will ; and that will acts with an inherent knowledge of the right measures of its decreed action and therefore with an effectivity unknown to our mental willing. Therefore too in the action of the *vijnānamaya* will there is no place for sin ; for all sin is an error of the will, a desire and act of the Ignorance.

When desire ceases entirely, grief and all inner suffering also cease. The Vijnana takes up not only our parts of knowledge and will, but our parts of affection and delight and changes them into action of the divine Ananda. For if knowledge and force are the twin sides of the action of consciousness, delight, Ananda,—which is something higher than what we call pleasure,—is the stuff of consciousness and the natural result of the interaction of knowledge and will, force and self-awareness. Both pleasure and pain, both joy and grief are deformations caused by the disturbance of harmony between our consciousness and the force it applies, between our knowledge and will, a breaking up of their oneness by a descent to a lower plane in which they are limited, divided in themselves, restrained from their full and proper action, at odds with other-force, other-consciousness, other-knowledge, other-will. The Vijnana sets this to rights by the power of its truth and a wholesale restoration to oneness and harmony, to the Right and the highest Law. It takes up all our emotions and turns them into various form of love and delight, even our hatreds, repulsions, causes of suffering. It finds out or reveals the meaning they missed and by missing which they became the perversions they are, and it restores our whole nature to the eternal Good. It deals similarly with our perceptions and sensations and reveals all the delight that they seek, but in its truth, not in any perversion and wrong seeking and wrong reception ;

it teaches even our lower impulses to lay hold on the Divine and Infinite in the appearances after which they run. All this is done not in the values of the lower being, but by a lifting up of the mental, vital, material into the inalienable purity as well as the natural intensity, in a word the continual ecstasy, one yet manifold, of the divine Ananda.

Thus the being of Vijnana is in all its activities a play of perfected knowledge-power, will-power, delight-power, raised to a higher than the mental, vital and bodily level, all-pervasive, universalised, freed from egoistic personality and individuality. For it is the play of a higher Self, a higher consciousness and therefore a higher force and higher delight of being, in the purity, in the right, in the truth of the superior or divine being. Its powers may often seem to be what are called in ordinary Yogic parlance siddhis, by the Europeans occult powers, shunned and dreaded by devotees and by many Yogins as snares, stumbling blocks, diversions from the true seeking after the Divine. But that is because they are sought in the lower being, abnormally, by the ego for an egoistic satisfaction. In the Vijnana they are neither occult nor siddhis, but the open, unforced and normal play of its nature. The Vijnana is the power and action of the divine Being in its divine nature, and when this acts through the individual lifted to that plane, it fulfils itself unperverted, without fault or egoistic reaction or diversion from the possession of the Divine. For there the individual is no longer the ego, but the Jiva in the higher divine nature, *parā prakṛitir jīvabhūtā*, the supreme and universal Self seen in the play of multiple individuality but with self-knowledge and in the truth of its divine Shakti.

In the Vijnana the right relation and action of Purusha and Prakriti are found, because there they become unified and the Divine is no longer veiled. All is his action. The Jiva no longer says "I think, I act, I desire"

I feel", he does not even say like the sadhaka striving after unity but before he has reached it, "As appointed by Thee seated in my heart, I act". For the heart, the centre of the mental consciousness is no longer the centre of origination but only a channel ; he is rather aware of the Divine seated above, lord of all, *adhithita*, as well as acting within, and seated himself in that higher being, *parârdhe, paramasyâm parâvatî*, he can say truly and boldly, "God himself by his Prakriti knows, acts, loves, takes delight by my apparent individuality and fulfils there in its higher and divine measures the multiple *lîla* which the Infinite plays in the universality of its being."

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

THE DISCOVERY AND REALISATION IN ONESELF OF THE ONE WHO IS IN ALL

III

THE CONQUEST OF SELF

DISINTERESTEDNESS

- 1 Self-interest is the prolongation in us of the animal. 'Humanity begins in man with disinterestedness.
- 2 Disinterestedness is not always understood. Yet is it the foundation of the virtues, without it they
- 3 could not be practised. — As dawn announces the rising of the sun, so in a man disinterestedness, purity, rectitude forerun the coming of the Eternal.
- 4 Whoever is rich within and embellished with virtue, seeks not outside himself for glory and riches.
- 5-6 —The perfect man does not hunt after wealth.—He must content himself with little and never ask for more than he has.
- 7 The least indigent mortal is the one who desires

1) Amiel. —2) Antoine the Healer. —3) Ramakrishna. —
4) Angelus Silesius. —5) Confucius. —6) Baha-ullah. —
7) Seneca.

- the least. We have everything we wish when we wish
 8 only for what is sufficient.—Many things are wanting to indigence, but everything is wanting to greed. A covetous man is useful to none and still less is he
 9 of any good to himself,—To covet external objects
 10 is to defile the mind.—To work only in the material sense is to increase the load that is crushing us.
 11 We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out,—and having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil.



- 12 O you who are vain of your mortal possessions, know that wealth is a heavy barrier between the
 13 seeker and the Desired.—Children of knowledge! the slender eyelash can prevent the eye from seeing; what then must be the effect of the veil of avarice over the eye of the heart!
 14 Let your behaviour be without covetousness, and
 15 be content with such things as you have.—In vain are you rich if you do not quell your passions; if an insatiable cupidity eats you up, if you are the prey of fears and anxieties, of what use to you is your
 16 opulence?—Mortify therefore covetousness, which
 17 is idolatry.—Set not thy heart upon riches.—Let your body be pure, pure your words, pure your thoughts. Free yourselves from the preoccupations of daily life; let not fields, houses, cattle, wealth and worldly goods be your encumbrances. Avoid the

8) id.—9) Chu-King.—10) Antoine the Healer.—11) Timothy VI. 7—10.—12) Baha-ullah.—13) id.—14) Hebrews. XIII. 5.—15) Plutarch.—16) Colossians III. 5.—17) Psalms.

anxieties which attend on all things, as one shuns a flaming gulf.

- 19 Labour not for the food which perishes but for
20 that which endures into everlasting life.—For where
your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

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* *

- 21 O thou who resumest in thyself all creation, cease
for one moment to be preoccupied with gain and
22 loss.—Found not thy glory on power and riches.—
23 Vex not thyself to be rich ; cease from thy own wisdom.
Wilt thou set thy eyes upon that which is not ? for riches certainly make themselves wings.
24 Thou whom all respect, impoverish thyself that
thou mayst enter the abode of the supreme riches.—
25 Thou shalt leave behind thee the embarrassments
with which wealth surrounds thee and thou shalt
find the immensity of the spiritual kingdom.

*

- 26 I have never counted as real possessions either
treasures or palaces or the places which give us credit
and put authority in our hands or the pleasures
27 of which men are slaves.—I strive to attain the happiness
which does not pass away nor perish and which
has not its source in riches or beauty nor depends
upon them.
28 My joy is in labouring to acquire spiritual wealth;
for the riches of this world pass away, but the treasures
of our spiritual earnings abide for ever.

18) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.—19) John VI. 27.—20) Matthew VI. 21.
21) Omar Khayyam.—22) Theognis.—23) Proverbs XXIII. 4—5.
24) Baha-ullah.—25) Ahmed Halif.—26) Cicero.—27) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.—28) id.

The Psychology of Social Development

XV

We begin to see, through the principle and law of our religious being, through the principle and law of our aesthetic being, the universality of a principle and law which is that, of all being and which we must therefore hold steadily in view in regard to all human activities. It rests on a truth on which the sages have always agreed, though by the intellectual thinker it may be constantly disputed. It is the truth that all active being is a seeking for God, a seeking for the hidden Divinity ; the truth which we glimpse through religion, lies concealed behind all life ; it is the great secret of life, that which it is in labour to discover and to make real to its self-knowledge.

This seeking for God is also, subjectively, the seeking for our highest, truest, fullest self. It is the seeking for a Reality which the appearances of life conceal because they only partially express it or because they express it from behind veils and figures, by oppositions and contraries, often by what seem to be perversions and opposites of the Reality itself. It is the seeking for something whose completeness comes only by a sense of the Infinite and Absolute, by finding a value of the infinite in all finite things and by the attempt—necessary, inevitable, however

impossible or paradoxical it may seem to the normal reason,—to raise all relativities to their absolutes and to reconcile their differences, oppositions and contraries by rising to some highest term in which all these are unified. Some perfect highest term there is by which all our imperfect lower terms can be justified and their discords harmonised if once we can reduce to them to be its conscious expressions, to exist not for themselves but for That, as contributory values of that highest Truth, fractional measures of that highest and largest common measure. A One there is in which all the entangled discords of this multiplicity of separated, conflicting, intertwining, colliding ideas, forces, tendencies, instincts, impulses, aspects, appearances which we call life, can find the unity of their diversity, the harmony of their divergences, the justification of their claims, the correction of their aberrations, the solution of their problems and disputes. Knowledge seeks for that in order that Life may know its own true meaning and transform itself into the highest and most harmonious possible expression of a divine Reality. All seeks for that, the infrarational blindly, the rational by following out and gathering together its diversities, analysing in order to synthesise, the suprarational by getting behind them to touch and lay hands on the Reality itself in its core and essence.

This truth comes most early home to us in Religion and in Art, the cult of the spiritual and the cult of the beautiful, because there we get away most thoroughly from the pressure of the outward appearances of life, the urgent siege of its necessities, the deafening clamour of its utilities. There we are not compelled at every turn to make terms with some gross material claim, some vulgar but inevitable necessity of the hour and the moment. We have leisure and breathing-time to seek the Real behind the apparent ; we are allowed to turn our eyes either away from the temporary and transient or through the temporal itself to the eternal ; we can look away from

the limitations of the immediately practical and recreate our souls by the touch of the ideal and the universal. We begin to shake off our chains, to get rid of life in its aspect of a prison-house with Necessity for our jailer and utility for our constant task-master ; we are admitted to the liberties of the soul ; we enter God's infinite kingdom of beauty and delight or we lay hands on the keys of our absolute self-finding and open ourselves to the possession or the adoration of the Eternal. There lies the immense value of Religion, the immense value of Art and Poetry to the human spirit ; it lies in their immediate power for inner truth, for self-enlargement, for liberation.

But in other spheres of life, in the spheres of what by an irony of our ignorance we call especially practical life,—although, if the Divine be our true object of search and realisation, our normal conduct in them and our current idea of them is the very opposite of practical,—we are less ready to recognise the universal truth. We take a long time to admit it even partially in theory, we are seldom ready at all to follow it in practice. And we find this difficulty because there especially, in all our practical life, we are content to be the slaves of an outward Necessity and think ourselves always excused in admitting the yoke of immediate and temporary utilities. Yet even there we must arrive eventually at the highest truth. We shall find out in the end that our daily life and our social existence are not things apart, are not another field of existence with another law than the inner and ideal ; on the contrary, we shall never find out their true meaning or resolve their harsh and often agonising problems until we learn to see in them a means of discovering and expressing individually and collectively our highest and, because our highest, therefore our truest and fullest self. All life is only a lavish and manifold opportunity for discovering, realising and expressing the Divine.

It is in our ethical being that this truest truth of

practical life, its real and highest practicality becomes most readily apparent. It is true that the rational man has tried to reduce the ethical life like all the rest to a matter of reason, to determine its nature, its law, its practical action by some principle of reason, by some law of reason. He has never really succeeded and he never can really succeed ; his appearances of success are mere pretences of the intellect making elegant constructions with words and ideas, mere conventions of logic and vamped-up syntheses, in sum pretentious failures which break down at the first strenuous touch of reality. Such is that extraordinary system of utilitarian ethics which was discovered in the nineteenth century—the great century of science and reason and utility—by one of its most positive and systematic minds and is now so deservedly discredited, with its substitution of a practical, outward and occasional test for the inner, subjective and absolute motive of ethics, with its reduction of ethical action to an impossibly scientific and quite impracticable jugglery of moral mathematics, attractive enough to the reasoning and logical mind, quite false and alien to the whole instinct and intuition of the ethical being. Equally false and impracticable are other attempts of the reason to account for and regulate its principle and phenomena, such as the hedonistic theory which refers all virtue to the pleasure and satisfaction of the mind in good or the sociological which supposes ethics to be no more than a generation from the social sense and social impulses and would regulate its action by that insufficient standard. The ethical being escapes from all these formulas ; it is a law to itself and finds its principle in its own eternal nature which is not in itself a growth of evolving mind, even though it may seem to be that in its earthly history, but a light from the ideal, a reflection in man of the Divine.

Not that all these errors have not each of them a truth behind their false constructions ; for all errors of the

human reason are false constructions, a wrong building upon, effective misconstructions of the truth. Utility is a fundamental principle of existence and all fundamental principles of existence are in the end one ; therefore it is true that the highest good is also the highest utility. It is true also that not any balance of the greatest good of the greatest number, but simply the good of others and most widely the good of all is the ideal aim of outgoing ethical practice ; it is that which the ethical man would like to effect, if he could only find the way and be always sure what is the real good of all. But this does not help to regulate our ethical practice, nor does it supply us with its inner principle whether of being or of action, but only produces one of the many considerations, by which we may feel our way along the road which is so difficult to travel. Good, not utility must be the principle and standard of good ; otherwise we fall into the hands of that dangerous pretender expediency, whose whole method is alien to the ethical. Moreover, the standard of utility, the judgment of utility, its spirit, its form, its application must vary with the individual nature, the habit of mind, the outlook on the world. Here there can be no reliable general law to which all can subscribe, no set of large governing principles such as is supplied to our conduct by true ethics. Nor can ethics at all or ever be a matter of calculation. There is only one safe rule for the ethical man, to stick to his principle of good, his instinct for good, his vision of good, his intuition of good and to govern by that his conduct. He may err, but he will be on his right road in spite of all stumblings, because he will be faithful to the law of his nature. The saying of the Gita is always true ; better is the law of one's own nature though ill-performed, dangerous is an alien law however speciously superior it may seem to our reason. But the law of nature of the ethical being is the pursuit of good ; it can never be the pursuit of utility.

Neither is it the pursuit of pleasure high or base, nor self-satisfaction of any kind, however subtle or even spiritual. It is true, here too, that the highest good is both in its nature and inner effect the highest bliss. Ananda, delight of being is the spring of all existence and that to which it tends and for which it seeks openly or covertly in all its activities. It is true too that in virtue growing, in good accomplished there is great pleasure and that the seeking for it may well be always there as a sub-conscious motive to the pursuit of virtue. But for practical purposes this is a side aspect of the matter ; it does not constitute pleasure into a test or standard of virtue. On the contrary, virtue comes to the natural man by a struggle with his pleasure-seeking nature and is often a deliberate embracing of pain, an edification of strength by suffering. We do not embrace that pain and struggle for the pleasure of the pain and the pleasure of the struggle ; for that higher strenuous delight, though it is felt by the secret spirit in us, is not usually or not at first conscious in the conscient normal part of our being which is the field of the struggle. The action of the ethical man is not motivated by even an inner pleasure, but by a call of his being, the necessity of an ideal, the figure of an absolute standard, a law of the Divine.

In the outward history of our ascent this does not at first appear clearly or perhaps at all ; there the evolution of man in society may seem to be the determining cause of his ethical evolution. For ethics only begins by the demand upon him of something other than his personal preference, vital pleasure or material self-interest ; and this demand seems at first to work on him through the necessity of his relations with others, by the demands of his social existence. But that this is not the core of the matter, is shown by the fact that the ethical demand does not always square with the social demand, nor the ethical standard always coincide with the social standard. On the

contrary the ethical man is often called upon to reject and do battle with the social demand, to break, move away from, reverse the social standard. His relations with others and his relations with himself are both of them the occasions of his ethical growth, but that which determines his ethical being is his relations with God, the urge of the Divine upon him whether concealed in his nature or conscious in his higher self. He obeys an inner ideal, not an outer standard, a divine law in his being not a social claim or collective necessity.

It has been felt and said from of old that the law of right, the laws of perfect conduct are the laws of the gods, eternal beyond, which man is conscious of and summoned to obey. The age of reason has scouted this summary account of the matter as a superstition or a poetical imagination which the nature and history of the world contradict. But still there is a truth in this ancient superstition or imagination which the rational denial of it misses and the rational confirmations of it, whether Kant's categorical imperative or another, do not altogether restore. If man's conscience is a creation of his evolving nature, if his conceptions of ethical law are mutable and depend on his stage of evolution, yet at the root of them there is something constant in all their mutations which lies at the very roots of his own nature and of world-nature. And if Nature in man and the world is in its beginnings infra-ethical as well as infra-rational, as it is at its summit supra-ethical as well as supra-rational, yet in that infra-ethical there is something which becomes in the human plane of being the ethical, and that supra-ethical is itself a consummation of the ethical and cannot be reached by any who have not trod the long ethical road. Below hides that secret of good in all things which the human being approaches and tries to deliver partially through ethical instinct and ethical idea; above is hidden the eternal good which exceeds our partial and

fragmentary ethical conceptions.

Our ethical impulses and activities begin like all the rest in the infra-rational and take their rise from the sub-conscious. They arise as an instinct of right, an instinct of obedience to an ununderstood law, an instinct of self-giving in labour, an instinct of sacrifice and self-sacrifice, an instinct of love, of self-subordination and of solidarity with others. Man obeys the law at first without inquiring the why and the wherefore, without seeking for it a sanction in the reason. His first thought is that it is a law created by higher powers than himself and his race and he says with the ancient poet that he knows not whence these laws sprang, but only that they are and endure and cannot with impunity be violated. What the instincts and impulses seek after, the reason labours to make us understand, so that the will may come to use the ethical impulses intelligently and turn the instincts into ethical ideas. It corrects the crude and often erring ethical instincts, separates and purifies their confused associations, shows them as best it can their relations, tries to arbitrate and compromise between their conflicting claims, arranges a system and many-sided rule of ethical action. And all this is well, a necessary stage of our advance ; but in the end these very ethical ideas and this intelligent ethical will which it has tried to train to its control, escape from its hold and soar up beyond its province. Always, even when enduring its rein and curb, they have that inborn tendency.

For the ethical being like the rest is a growth and a seeking towards the absolute, the divine which can only be attained securely in the suprarational. It seeks after an absolute purity, an absolute right, an absolute truth, an absolute strength, an absolute love and self-giving, and it is most satisfied when it can get them in absolute measure, without limit, curb or compromise, divinely, infinitely, in a sort of godhead and transfiguration of the ethi-

cal being. The reason is chiefly concerned with what it best understands, the apparent process, the machinery, the outward act, its result and effect, its circumstance, occasion and motive ; by these it judges the morality of the action and the morality of the doer. But the developed ethical being knows instinctively that it is an inner something which it seeks and the outward act is only a means of bringing out and manifesting within ourselves by its psychological effects that inner absolute and eternal entity ; the value of our actions is not so much in their apparent nature and outward result as in their help towards the growth of the Divine within us. It is difficult, even impossible to justify upon outward grounds the absolute justice, absolute right, absolute purity, love or selflessness of an action or course of action ; for action is always relative, it is mixed and uncertain in its results, perplexed in its occasions. But it is possible to relate the inner being to the eternal and absolute good, to make our sense and will full of it so as to act out of its impulsion or its intuitions and inspirations. That is what the ethical being labours towards and the higher ethical man increasingly attains to in his inner efforts.

In fact ethics is not in its essence a calculation of good and evil in the action or a laboured effort to be blameless according to the standards of the world,—those are only crude appearances,—it is an attempt to grow into the divine nature. Its parts of purity are an aspiration towards the inalienable purity of God's being ; its parts of truth and right are a seeking after conscious unity with the law of the divine knowledge and will ; its parts of sympathy and charity are a movement towards the infinity and universality of the divine love ; its parts of strength and manhood are an edification of the divine strength. That is the heart of its meaning. And its high fulfilment comes when the being of the man undergoes this transfiguration ; then it is not his actions that stand-

ardise his nature but his nature that gives value to his actions ; then he is no longer laboriously virtuous, but naturally divine. Actively, too, he is fulfilled and consummated when he is not led or moved either by the infra-rational impulses or the rational intelligence and will, but inspired and piloted by the divine knowledge and will made conscious in his nature ; and that can only be done, first by communication through the intuitive mind as it purifies itself progressively from the invasion of egoism, self-interest, desire, passion and all kinds of self-will, finally through the supra-rational light and power, no longer communicated but present and in possession of his being. Such was the supreme aim of the ancient sages who had the wisdom which rational man and rational society have rejected because it was too high a truth for the comprehension of the reason and for the powers of the normal limited human will too bold and immense, too infinite an effort.

Therefore it is with the cult of Good, as with the cult of Beauty and the cult of the spiritual. Even in its first instincts it is already an obscure seeking after the divine and absolute; it aims at an absolute satisfaction, it finds its highest light and means in something beyond the reason, it is fulfilled only when it finds God, when it creates in man some image of the divine Reality. Rising from its infra-rational beginnings through its intermediate dependence on the reason to a suprarational consummation, the ethical is like the aesthetic and the religious being of man a seeking after the Eternal.

Hymns of the Atris

THE FIRST HYMN TO THE DAWN

[The Rishi prays for the full epiphany of the Dawn of the light of Truth in all its lavish splendour, with all the bountiful companies of its gods and seers, the shining herds of its thought, the rushing steeds of its force, the luminous impulsions with which it comes—companioned, as they are, by the burning rays of the Sun of gnosis. Let the Dawn arrive and the work will no longer be long and tardy.]

1 O Dawn, come with all thy splendours of heaven, awaken us today to the great felicity, even as once thou awakenedst us, — *in the sonhood of the birth of knowledge, in the inspired hearing of the Truth.*¹

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

2 Thou who breakest forth into dawning, O daughter of heaven, in him who has the perfect leading of the flaming chariot of light,² so break forth today,—*O greater still in thy force, in the sonhood of the birth of knowledge, in the inspired hearing of the Truth.*

1. The name of the Rishi is here a covert figure for the characteristics of the Sun-birth in man. 2. The same figure, with another name ; it gives the result of the Sun-birth.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

3 Break forth into light a bearer of treasures, O daughter of heaven, as once thou brokest forth,—
O greater still in thy force, in the sonhood of the birth of knowledge, in the inspired hearing of the Truth.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

4 There are bearers of the sacrifice 3 who bring thee out in their speech, by their hymns they manifest thee, O wide and lustrous Dawn; they are glorious with thy plenty, O queen, their gifts are lavish, their boons are full.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

5 When these companies of thy godheads seek to pleasure thee in hope of thy plenitudes, they set their desires all around, they lavish thy undeviating felicity.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

6 These are thy seers; O Dawn, queen of plenty, set in them the splendour of thy heroic powers; lords of thy plenty, they shall lavish on us thy undeviating riches.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

7 O Dawn, our lady of plenty, bring to them

3. Not human priests, but divine powers, the hosts or companies of the Dawn, "*ganas*," at once priests, seers and patrons of the inner sacrifice, winners and givers of the celestial wealth,

thy illumination, a vast glory ; they shall give us enjoyment of the felicity of thy steeds and the felicity of thy herds.

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

8 Bring to us too, O daughter of heaven, powers of impulse full of the troopings of thy light ; let them come companioned with the rays of thy Sun, linked with the purity of his bright and burning light-givings.

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of the steeds.

9 Break forth into light, O daughter of heaven ! And spin not out too long the work. For thee thy sun afflicts not with his burning ray as he afflicts the foe and the thief.⁴

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

10 So much thou shouldst give or more than this ; for to thy adorers thou breakest forth into the full wideness of thy glories and thou art not limited in thy dawning.

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

4. The labour towards the being of the Truth is long and tedious, because the powers of darkness and division, the lower powers of our being, seize on and appropriate, keep idle or misuse the gains of the knowledge. They are not bearers of the sacrifice, but its spoilers ; they are hurt by the full ray of the sun. But this Dawn of knowledge can bear the full illumination and bring to a rapid conclusion the great work.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXVI

In almost all current ideas of the first step towards international organisation it is taken for granted that the nations will continue to enjoy their full separate existence and liberties and will only leave to international action the prevention of war, the regulation of dangerous disputes, the power of settling great international questions which the nations cannot settle by ordinary means. It is impossible, however, that the development should stop there, for this first step would necessarily lead to others which could only travel in one direction. Whatever authority were established, would find itself called upon to act more and more frequently and to assume always increasing powers. To avoid preventible disturbance and friction, to avert hereafter the recurrence of troubles and disasters which in the beginning the first limitations of its powers had debarred the new authority from averting by a timely intervention before they came to a head, to bring about a coordination of activities for common ends would be the principal motives impelling humanity to advance from a looser to a closer union, from a voluntary self-subordination in great and exceptional matters to an obligatory subordination in all matters, an organised federation or single world-State with the nations for its provinces. The desire of powerful nations to use it for their

own purposes, the utility for weaker nations of appealing to it for the protection of their interests, the shock of actual or threatened internal disturbances and revolutions would all help to give the international authority greater power and provide occasions for extending its normal action. Science, thought and religion, the three great forces which in modern times tend increasingly to override national distinctions and point the race towards unity of life and spirit, would become more impatient of national barriers, hostilities and divisions and lend all their powerful influence to the change. The great approaching struggle between capital and labour, becoming worldwide and arriving at an international organisation, might well be a means of precipitating the inevitable step, might be even the actual crisis which would bring about the transformation.

We are supposing at present that a well-unified world-State would be the final outcome. At first taking up the regulation of international disputes and of economic treaties and relations, the international authority would change from an arbiter and an occasional executive power to a legislative body and a standing executive power. Its legislation would be absolutely necessary in international matters, if fresh convulsions are to be avoided ; for it is idle to suppose that any international arrangement, any ordering of the world arrived at after the close of the present war and upheaval, could be permanent and definitive. Injustice, inequalities, abnormalities, causes of quarrel or dissatisfaction would remain in the relations of nation with nation, continent with continent which would lead to fresh hostilities and explosions. As these are prevented in the nation-State by the legislative authority modifying the system of things in conformity with new ideas, interests, forces, necessities, so it would have to be in the developing world-State. This legislative power, —which, as it developed, extended, regularised itself, be-

came more complex and bound to interfere at many points and override or substitute itself for the separate national action, would imply the growth also of the executive power and an international executive organisation,—might at first confine itself to the most important questions and affairs which obviously demanded its control ; but it would tend increasingly to stretch to all matters which could be viewed as having an international effect and importance, even those in which the nations are now jealous of their own rights and power. And eventually it would invade the whole system of the national life itself and subject it to international control in the interests of the better coordination of the united life, culture, science, organisation, education, efficiency of the human race. It would reduce the now free and separate nations first to the position of the States of the American union or the German empire and eventually perhaps to that of geographical provinces or departments of the single nation of mankind.

The present obstacle to any such extreme consummation is the still strong principle of nationalism, the sense of group separateness, the instinct of separateness, its pride, its pleasure in itself, its various sources of egoistic self-satisfaction, its insistence on the subordination of the human idea to the national idea. But we are supposing that the new-born idea of internationalism will grow apace and subject to itself the past idea and temper of nationalism, that it will become dominant and take possession of the human mind. As the larger nation-group has subordinated to itself and tended to absorb all smaller clan, tribal and regional groups, as the larger empire-group now tends to subordinate to itself and may eventually absorb all smaller nation-groups, so, we are supposing, the complete human group of united mankind will subordinate to itself and eventually absorb all smaller groups of separated humanity. It is only by such a growth of the international

idea, the idea of a single humanity, that nationalism can disappear, since the old natural device of an external unification by conquest seems no longer to be possible, the methods of war having become too disastrous and no single empire having the means and the strength to overcome, whether rapidly or in the gradual Roman way, the rest of the world. Undoubtedly, nationalism is a more powerful obstacle to farther unification than was the separativeness of the old petty and less firmly self-conscious groupings which preceded the developed nation-State. It is still the most powerful sentiment in the collective human mind, still gives an indestructible vitality to the nation and is apt to reappear even where it seemed to have been abolished. But we cannot argue safely from the present balance of tendencies in the beginning of a great era of transitions. Already there are at work not only ideas but forces, all the more powerful for being forces of the future rather than established powers of the present, which may succeed in subordinating nationalism to themselves far earlier than we can at present conceive.

If the principle of the world-State be carried to its logical conclusion and to its extreme consequences, the result will be a process analogous, though with necessary differences, to that by which in the building of the nation State the central government, first as a monarchy, then as a democratic assembly and executive, gathered up into itself the whole administration of the national life. There will be a centralisation of all control, military and police, administrative, judicial, legislative, economical, social, cultural, in the one international authority and as a result of the centralisation a principle of uniformity and a sort of rationalised mechanism of human life and activities throughout the world with justice, universal well-being, economy of effort, scientific efficiency as its principal objects. Instead of the individual activities of nation-groups each working for itself with friction and waste and

conflict, there will be an effort at coordination, such as we now see in a well-organised modern State, of which the complete idea is a throughgoing State socialism, nowhere yet realised indeed, but rapidly coming into being. How and why this development must take place, we can see if we glance briefly at each department of the communal activity.

We have seen already that all military power,—which in a world-State would mean an international armed police,—must be concentrated in the hands of the common authority. A concentration of the final power of decision in economic matters would be also inevitable ; but in the end this supremacy could not stop short of a complete control. For the economic life of the world is becoming more and more one and indivisible and the present state of international relations is an anomalous condition of opposite principles partly in conflict, partly accommodating with each other as best they can. On one side there is the underlying unity which makes each nation commercially dependent on all the rest ; on the other there is the spirit of national jealousy, egoism and sense of separate existence which makes each nation attempt at once to assert its industrial independence and at the same time reach out for a hold of its outgoing commercial activities upon other markets than its own. The interaction of these two principles is regulated at present partly by the permitted working of natural forces, partly by tacit practice and understanding, partly by systems of tariff protection, bounties, State aid of one kind or another on the one hand and commercial treaties and agreements on the other. Inevitably, as the world-State grew, this would be felt to be an anomaly, a wasteful, uneconomical process. The international authority would more and more intervene to modify the free arrangements of nation with nation ; the commercial interests of humanity at large would be given the first place, the indepen-

dent proclivities, commercial ambitions or jealousies of this or that nation would be compelled to subordinate themselves to the human good. The ideal of mutual exploitation would be replaced by the ideal of a fit and proper share in the common economical life of the race. Especially, as socialism advanced and began to regulate the whole economic existence of separate countries, the same principle would gain ground in the international field and in the end the world-State would be called upon to take up into its hands the right ordering of the industrial production and distribution of the world. Each country might be allowed to produce its own absolute necessities,—though in the end it would probably be felt that this was no more necessary than for Wales or Ireland to produce all its own necessities independently of the rest of the British isles or for one province of India to be an economical unit independent of the rest of the country; but for the most part each would produce and distribute only what it could to the best advantage, most naturally, most efficiently and most economically, for the common need and demand of mankind in which its own would be inseparably included. It would do this according to a system settled by the common will of mankind through its State government and under a method made uniform in its principles, however variable in local detail, so as to secure the simplest, smoothest and most rational working of a necessarily complicated machinery.

The administration of the general order of society is a less pressing matter of concern than it was to the nation-States in their period of formation, because those were times when the element of order had almost to be created and violence, crime and revolt were both more easy and more a natural propensity of mankind. At the present day not only are societies tolerably well organised in this respect and equipped with the absolutely necessary agreements between country and country, but by an elaborate

system of national, regional and municipal government the State can regulate parts of the order of life with which the cruder governments of old were quite unable to deal effectively. In the world-State, it may be thought, each country may be left to its own free action in matters of its internal order, and indeed of all its separate political, social and cultural life. But even here it is probable that the world-State would demand a greater centralisation and uniformity.

In the matter, for instance, of the continual struggle of society with the still ineradicable element of crime which it generates in its own bosom, the crudity of the present system is sure to be recognised and a serious attempt made to deal with it radically. The first necessity would then be the close observation and supervision of the great mass of constantly recreated corrupt human material in which the bacillus of crime finds its natural breeding-ground. This is at present done very crudely and imperfectly, for the most part after the event of actual crime, by the police of each nation for itself with extradition treaties and informal mutual aid as a device against evasion by displacement. The world-State would insist on an international as well as a local supervision, not only to deal with the phenomenon of what may be called international crime and disorder which is likely to increase largely under future conditions, but for the more important object of the prevention of crime.

For the second necessity it would feel, would be to deal with crime at its roots and in its inception. It may attempt this first by a more enlightened method of education and moral and temperamental training which would render the growth of criminal propensities more difficult; secondly, by scientific or eugenic methods of observation, treatment, isolation, perhaps sterilisation of corrupt human material; thirdly, by a humane and enlightened gaol system and penological method having for

its aim not the punishment but the reform of the incipient and the formed criminal. It would insist on a certain uniformity of principle so that there might not be countries persevering in backward and old-world or inferior or erratic systems and so defeating the general object. For this end centralisation of control would be necessary. So too with the judicial method. The present system is still vaunted of as enlightened and civilised—it is so perhaps comparatively,—but a time will surely come when it will be considered grotesque, inefficient, irrational and in many of its principal features semi-barbaric, a half-conversion at most of the more confused and arbitrary methods of an earlier state of society. With the development of a more rational system the preservation of the old juridical and judicial principles and methods in any part of the world would be felt to be intolerable and the world-State would be led to standardise the new principles and the new methods by a common legislation and probably a general centralised control.

In all these matters, it might be said, uniformity and centralisation would be beneficial and probably necessary and therefore no jealousy of national separateness and independence might be allowed under such conditions to interfere with the common good of humanity; but at least in the choice of their political system and in other spheres of their social life the nations might well be left to follow their own ideals and propensities, to be healthily and naturally free. It may even be said that the nations would never tolerate any serious interference in these matters and that the attempt to use the World-State for such a purpose would be fatal to its existence. But as a matter of fact the principle of political non-interference is likely to be much less admitted in the future than it has been in the past or is at present. Always in times of great and passionate struggle between conflicting political ideas,—**between** oligarchy and democracy in ancient Greece,

between the old regime and the ideas of the French revolution in modern Europe,—the principle of political non-interference has gone to the wall. But now we see another phenomenon—the opposite principle of interference slowly erecting itself into a conscious rule of international life. America showed the way by its intervention in Cuba and in Mexico, not on grounds of national interest, but on behalf of liberty, constitutionalism and democracy, on international grounds therefore and practically in the force of this idea that the internal arrangements of a country concern under certain conditions of disorder or insufficiency not only itself, but its neighbours and humanity at large. A similar principle was proposed by the Allies in Greece, and now we see it applied to one of the most powerful nations of the world in the refusal of the Allies to treat with Germany or, practically, to readmit it into the comity of nations unless it sets aside its existing political system and principles and adopts the forms of modern democracy.

This idea of the common interest of the race in the internal affairs of a nation is bound to increase as the life of humanity becomes more unified. The great political question of the future is likely to be that of Socialism. Supposing socialism to triumph in the leading nations of the world, it will inevitably seek to impose itself everywhere not only by indirect pressure, but even by direct interference in what it would consider backward countries. An international authority, Parliamentary or other, in which it commanded the majority or the chief influence, would be too ready a means to be neglected. Moreover a world-State would probably no more find it possible to tolerate the continuance of certain nations as capitalist societies, itself being socialistic in major part, than a socialist Great Britain would tolerate a capitalist Scotland or Wales. Supposing on the other hand all nations to become socialistic in form, it would be natural enough

for the world-State to coordinate all these socialisms into one great system of united human life. But Socialism means the destruction of the distinction between political and social activities ; it means the socialisation of the common life and its subjection in all its parts to organised government and administration. Nothing small or great escapes its purview. Birth and marriage, labour and amusement and rest, education, culture, training of physique and character, the socialistic sense leaves nothing outside its scope. Therefore, granting an international socialism, neither the politics nor the social life of the peoples is likely to escape the centralised control of the world-State.

Such a world-system is remote indeed from our present conceptions and established habits of life, but these conceptions and habits are already being subjected at their roots to powerful forces of change. Uniformity too is becoming more and more the law of the world ; it is becoming more and more difficult, in spite of sentiment and in spite of conscious efforts of conservation and revival, for local individualities to survive. But the triumph of uniformity would naturally make for centralisation, the radical incentive to separateness being removed, just as centralisation once accomplished would make for uniformity. Such decentralisation as might be called for in a uniform humanity would be needed for convenience of administration, not on the ground of separative variations. Once the national sentiment goes under before a dominant internationalism, large questions of culture and race would be the only grounds left for the preservation of a strong though subordinate principle of separation in the world-State. But difference of culture is quite as much threatened today as any other more outward principle of group variation. The differences between the European nations are simply minor variations of a common occidental culture and with science, that great power for uniformity of thought and life and method, becoming more

and more the greater part and threatening to become the whole of culture and life, the importance of these variations is likely to decrease. The only radical difference is between the occident and the orient; but with Asia undergoing the shock of Europeanism and Europe feeling the reflux of Asiaticism the most probable outcome is a common world-culture. The valid objection to centralisation will then be greatly diminished in force, if not entirely removed. Race-sense is perhaps a stronger obstacle because it is more irrational; but this too may be removed by the closer intellectual, cultural and physical intercourse which is inevitable in the not distant future.

The dream of the cosmopolitan socialist thinker may therefore be realised; given the powerful continuance of the present trend of world-forces, it is even inevitable. Even what seems now most a chimera, a common language, may become a reality. For a State naturally tends to establish one language as the instrument of all its public affairs, its thought, its literature, while the rest sink into patois, dialects, provincial tongues, like Welsh in Great Britain or Breton and Provençal in France; exceptions like Switzerland are few, hardly more than one or two in number, and preserved by unusually favourable conditions. It is difficult indeed to suppose that languages with powerful literatures spoken by millions of cultured men will allow themselves to be put into a quite secondary position, much less snuffed out by any old or new speech of man; but it cannot be certainly said that scientific reason taking possession of the mind of the race and thrusting aside separatist sentiment as a barbaric anachronism may not accomplish even this psychological miracle. In any case variety of language need be no insuperable obstacle to uniformity of culture, uniformity of education, life, organisation or a regulating scientific machinery applied to all departments of life and settled for the common good by the united will and intelligence of the human race. For that would be what a world-State such as we have imagined, would stand for, its meaning, its justification, its human object. Nothing else indeed would necessitate or could justify its creation.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE ASCENT AND ITS DOWNWARD EYE

The evolution of the human race only assumes its true place and just meaning and is only intelligible whether in its principle or the great lines of its plan, if we regard it, not in itself, but in its relation to the universe. But the universe is, we have seen, only the universal mind and life-force determined in the forms of material substance and determining them according to the laws fixed by the divine supermind, gnosis or self-knowledge and all-knowledge. Therefore we must regard our race-life as part of one line—the line with which we here upon earth are concerned—of the evolutionary self-manifestation of the Spirit or universal being in a material universe. And that line must reproduce in itself the general principle and evolving plan of being itself, whatever may be its own special and subordinate principle. For nothing here exists in itself and by itself, but only by its meaning first to the universal and then to its own and the universe's supreme Reality.

Now, the self-manifestation of the Spirit in a material universe means an involution of consciousness and force in the form and activity of material substance and its awakening and ascent,—evolution, as we have now agreed to call it,—from principle to principle, from gra-

de to grade. Each series of grades of consciousness is determined by the fact of consciousness being more or less involved, quite involved in inconscient matter, hesitating on the verge between involution and conscious evolution in the first or non-animal forms of life in matter, consciously evolving in mind housed in a living body, to be fully evolved by the awakening of the supermind in the embodied mental being. To each series of grades belongs its appropriate class of existences,—material forms and forces, vegetable lives, animals and half-animal man, divine beings ; but there is no rigid line between them except such as has got settled by the fixed habit of Nature. Consciousness passes from one series of grades to another, whether by imperceptible process, by some bound or crisis or by an intervention from above,—let us say, some descent or ensouling or influence from higher worlds. But the main point is that, by whatever means, the consciousness of Spirit in matter is able to ascend from the lower to the higher gradations. Thus, having laid down a basis of material being, material forms, forces, existences in which it seems to be lying inconscient or, in reality, as we now know, always working subconsciously, it is still able to manifest life, to manifest mind and mental beings in a material world and must therefore be able to manifest there supermind also and supramental beings. This is the general principle of the evolution.

To our eyes the leap from one series to the other seems immense ; the crossing of the gulf whether by bridge or by leap seems to be impossible, nor can we discover any satisfactory evidence of its accomplishment or of the manner in which it was accomplished. Even in the outward evolution, even in the development of physical forms, the missing link remains always missing ; but in the evolution of consciousness the passage is still more difficult to account for, for it seems more like a

transformation than a passage. Partly, this may be due to insufficient observation of the minute gradations not only in each series itself, but on the borders between series and series; the scientist who observes them minutely, is therefore ready to believe in the possibility. But still there is a real, a radical difference, so much so that the passage from one to another seems a miracle of transformation rather than a natural transition.

This appears the more as we rise higher in the scale. Life in the metal has been shown to be identical with life in the plant in its essence and what might be called the psychological difference,—for there is one,—might seem, though great, to be principally a matter of degree. Between the highest vegetable and the lowest animal the gulf is visibly greater; for in the one *chitta*, stuff of mental consciousness, is unawakened though in its own way intensely, amazingly active, in the other, though less intense in that way and in its own new way imperfectly determined, it is still awakened; the transition has been made. Between the highest animal and the lowest man there is a still wider gulf to be crossed, the gulf between sense-mind and the intellect; for harp on the animal nature of the savage, as we will, we cannot alter the fact that the savage has above and beyond the sense-mind which we share with the animals, a human intellect and is capable—in whatever limits—of reflection, ideas, conscious invention, religious and moral thoughts, everything of which man as a race is capable, and differs only in its past instruction and the degree of its intensity and activity. Yet we can no longer suppose that God or some demiurge has manufactured each genus and species ready made in body and in consciousness and left the matter there, having looked upon his work and seen that it was good. We are driven to suppose that Nature has effected the transition by swift or slow degrees and, having made it, did not care to preserve as distinct forms what were

only stepping-stones,—the animal vegetable or vegetable animal, the animal man or humanised animal. But this, after all, is little more than a hypothesis.

Let us, however, look, not at the scientific or physical aspect, but purely at the psychological side of the question and see precisely in what the difference lies. In the first place, it consists, as we see, in the rise of consciousness to another principle of being. The metal is fixed in the principle of matter ; we know now that it has movements of life in it, but still it is not characteristically a form of life ; it is characteristically a form of matter. The plant is fixed in the principle of life,—not that it is not subject to matter or devoid of mind, for it has at least a nervous psychology, reactions of pleasure and pain ; but still it is a form of life, not of mere matter nor is it, so far as we know, a mentally conscious being. Man and the animal are both mentally conscious beings, but the animal is fixed in mind-sense and cannot exceed its limitations, while man has received into his sense-mind the light of another principle, the intellect, which is really at once a reflection and a degradation of the supermind, a ray of gnosis seized by the sense-mentality and transformed by it into something other than its source ; for it is agnostic like the sense-mind in which and for which it works, not gnostic, it seeks to lay hold on knowledge, but does not hold knowledge in itself. In other words, in each of these forms of existence the universal being has fixed its action of consciousness in a different principle or, as between man and animal, in the modification of a lower by a higher though now degraded principle ; that makes, not all the difference, but the radical inner difference between being and being.

We must observe that this fixing successively in higher and higher principles does not carry with it the abandonment of the lower grades, any more than the dwelling in the lower grades means the absence of the higher

principles. Life, mind, supermind are present in the atom, are at work there, but subconsciously ; that is to say, there is an informing Spirit, but the outer force of conscious being, what we might call the formal or form consciousness as distinguished from the immanent or governing consciousness, is lost in the physical action, is so absorbed into it as to be fixed in a stereotyped self-oblivion unaware of what it is and what it is doing. The atom is a sort of eternal somnambulist, an outer or form consciousness asleep and driven by an inner existence,—he who is awake in the sleeper, as the Upanishad puts it,—an outer consciousness which, unlike that of the human somnambulist, has never been awake and is not always, or ever, on the point of waking. In the plant the outer consciousness is still in the state of sleep, but of a sleep full of nervous dreams, always on the point of waking, but never awaking. Life has appeared ; in other words, force of conscious being has been so much intensified, has raised itself to such a height of power as to develop or become capable of a new principle of action, that which we see as vitality. It has become nervously aware of existence, though not mentally aware, and has put forth a new grade of activities of a higher and subtler value than the physical. At the same time it is capable of receiving and turning into these new values life contacts and physical contacts from other forms than its own which the forms of matter cannot deal with, cannot turn into any kind of value, partly because their own receiving power is not sufficiently subtle and intense, partly because the contacts themselves are too subtle. The plant does not reject the physical, it takes it up and gives it new values.

So in the animal being mind and sense appear, that which we call conscious life. That is to say, force of conscious being is so much intensified, rises to such a height as to develop a new principle of being,—apparently new

at least in the world of matter,—mentality. It is mentally aware of existence, its own and others, puts forth a higher and subtler grade of activities, receives a wider range of contacts, mental, vital, physical, from forms other than its own, takes up the physical and vital existence and turns all it can get from them consciously into sense values and mind values. It senses body, it senses life, but it senses also mind ; it has not only nervous reactions, but conscious sensations, impulses, volitions, emotions, mental associations, the stuff of feeling and thought and will.

When we come to man, the whole thing becomes conscious and begins to reveal to itself its own nature. The higher animal is not the somnambulist,—as lower animal forms still mainly are,—but it has only a limited waking mind ; in man the conscious being enlarges its wakefulness and though not at first fully self-conscious, can, it seems, open to its own integral being. As in the two lower ascents, there is a heightening of the force of conscious being to a new power and a new range of subtle activities, those of intelligent mind. As in them, so here, there is also a widening of his range of consciousness ; he is able to take in more of the world and of himself as well as to give it higher values of conscious experience. So too, there is the third constant element of the ascension, the taking up of the lower grades and giving to them intelligent values. Man has not only the sense of his body and life, but the intelligent sense and idea of it. He takes up too the mental life of the animal, as well as the physical and bodily ; but he gives them higher values ; he has the intelligent sense and the idea of his sensations, emotions, volitions, impulses, mental associations, and what was crude stuff of thought and feeling and will, capable only of gross determinations, he turns into the finished work and artistry of these things. For the animal too thinks, but in a mechanical series of me-

mories and mental associations ; it has the crude stuff of reason, but not the formed ideative and reflective faculty. The waking consciousness in the animal is the unskilled artisan of mind, in man it is the skilled craftsman and can become—but this he does not attempt sufficiently,—not only the artist, but master and adept.

But here we have to observe two particularities of this human and at present highest development, which take us to the heart of the matter. First, this taking up of the lower parts of life reveals itself as a turning downward of the master eye of the Spirit or universal being from the height to which he has reached, a gazing down-with the double or twin power of his being, consciousness and force, knowledge and will, so as to understand this lower life and its possibilities and to raise it also up to a higher level, to give it higher values, to bring out of it higher possibilities. And this he evidently does because he does not intend to kill or destroy it, but, delight of existence being his eternal business and a harmony of various strains, not a sweet but monotonous melody the method of his music, he wishes to include them also and get more delight out of them. Still it is always on condition of their admitting the higher values and, until they do consent, he deals harshly enough with them even to trampling them under foot when he is bent on perfection and they are rebellious. And that is the true aim of ethics, discipline and askesis, to lesson and tame, purify and prepare to be fit instruments the vital and physical and lower mental life so that they may be transformed into notes of the higher mental and eventually the supramental, but not to mutilate and destroy them. This downward eye of knowledge and will with a view to an all-round heightening is his way from the beginning. The plant takes, as we may say, a nervous view of its whole physical existence so as to get out of it all the vital intensity possible,—note its intense nervous excitement and pains and pleasures, vitally

much greater than the animal mind and body will tolerate. The animal takes a mentalised sense-view of its vital and physical existence so as to get out of it all the sense value possible, much acuter than man's as mere sensation or sense-emotion. Man, looking downward from the plane of will and intelligence, abandons these lower intensities, but in order to get out of them a higher intensity in other values, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, spiritual or at the least mentally dynamic or, as he calls it, practical. This he does even on his normal levels.

But, secondly, man not only turns his gaze downward and around him, when he has reached a higher level, but upward. In him not only the downward gaze of Sachchidananda has become conscious, but the conscious upward gaze also develops. The animal is satisfied with what Nature has done for him; if there is any upward gaze of the secret spirit within him he has nothing consciously to do with it, that is still Nature's business: it is man who first makes this upward gaze consciously his business. That is because by his possession of intelligent will, deformed ray of the gnosis though it be, he begins to put on the double nature of Sachchidananda; he is no longer, like the animal, an undeveloped conscious being driven by Prakriti, a slave of the executive Force, played with by the Nature-Soul, but a developing conscious soul or Purusha interfering with what was her sole business, wishing to have a say in it and eventually to be the master. He cannot do it yet, he is too much in her meshes; but he knows that the Spirit within him wishes to rise to yet higher heights, to widen its bounds and that it is not the business of the conscious Nature in him, the Purusha-Prakriti, to be satisfied with his present lowness and limitations. To climb to higher altitudes, to get a greater scope, to transform his lower nature, is not this always the natural impulse of man as soon as he has made his place for himself in the physical and vital world

of earth and has a little leisure to consider his further possibilities ? It must be so not because of any false and pitiful imaginative illusion in him, but, first, because he is the imperfect, yet developing mental being ; secondly, because he is capable, unlike other terrestrial creatures, of becoming aware of what is above the mind, of supermind, of spirit, opening to it, admitting it, rising towards it, taking hold of it. We have therefore every reason to say that it is in his human nature, in all human nature, to exceed itself by conscious evolution, to climb beyond what he is. Not individuals only, but the race can hope to rise beyond the imperfections of our present very undivine nature and to ascend at least to a superior humanity, if not absolutely to a divine manhood.

But where is the limit ? Certainly, in mind itself there are grades of the series and each grade again is a series in itself, successive elevations which we may conveniently call planes and sub-planes of the mental consciousness and the mental being. At present we normally take our stand on the lowest sub-plane of the intelligence, which we may call the physical, because it depends on the physical brain, the physical senses, the physical sense-mind. All the rest, all that is not sense-experience, it builds either out of or upon the physical sense-mentality and even then regards these higher contents as imaginations and thought abstractions, not as realities ; or at any rate even when we receive them as realities, we do not feel them concretely and substantially in their own proper substance, subtler than the physical substance and its grosser concreteness. But above there is what we may call an intelligence of the life-mind nervous and psychic which does so concretely sense and contact the things of the life-world and the unseen dynamic forces and realities of the material universe, does not need the evidence of the physical senses, is not limited by them. There our life and the life of the world become real to us independent of

the body and of the symbols of the physical world which alone now we call natural phenomena, as if Nature had no greater phenomena and no greater realities than these ! Yet above is a mind of pure intelligence which senses directly all the things of the mind-world and the intelligence and ideative activities of beings in the material world which at present we can only infer and cannot experience directly. There mind and soul independent of the body become to us an entire reality, and we can consciously live in them much more than in the body. Finally, yet above are a plane of intuitive mind dense with light derived direct from the gnosis and a plane of pure spiritual mind in which we are in direct contact with the infinite, in perfect touch with the self and highest reality of things, Sachchidananda.

It is clear that if we can raise ourselves to live on these levels, not merely receive influences descending from them, which is all we normally do, there could be that heightening of our force of conscious being so as to create a new principle of consciousness, a new range of activities, new values for all things, that widening of our consciousness and life, that taking up and transformation of the lower grades of our existence, by which the Soul in Nature creates a higher type of being in the evolution. Each step would mean a more divine being, a more divine force and consciousness, knowledge and will, sense of existence and delight in existence, in short an initial unfolding towards the divine life. All religion, all philosophy, all Yoga, all psychic experience and discipline are signposts and directions pointing us upon that road. But the human race is still weighted by a certain gravitation towards the physical, the pull of our yet unconquered earth-matter ; it is dominated by the brain-mind, the physical intelligence, and it hesitates before the indication or falls back before the effort. It has too as yet a great capacity for sceptical folly, an immense indolence, an enormous intellectual

and spiritual timidity and conservatism when called out of the grooves of habit, and even the constant evidence of life itself that where it chooses to conquer, it can conquer,—witness the miracles of that quite inferior power, physical science,—does not prevent it from doubting or repelling a new call and leaving the response to a few individuals. But that will not do ; for it is only when the race advances that the victories of the Spirit can be secure. For then, even if there is a fall, a certain atavistic force in the race will call it upward again and the next ascent will be both easier and more lasting because of the past endeavour ; for that and its result remain stored in the subconscious mind of humanity. Who can say what victories of the kind may have been achieved in our past cycles and how easy comparatively may be the next ascension ?

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XXXVI

GNOSIS AND ANANDA

The ascent to the gnosis and the possession of the gnostic consciousness raise both the soul of man and his life in the world to a glory of light and power and bliss and infinity which seems in comparison with the lame action and limited realisations of the mental being the very status and dynamis of an absolute perfection. And it is perfection, which nothing before it has been,—for even the highest spiritual realisation on the plane of mentality has in it something top-heavy, one-sided and exclusive, and the widest is marred by its imperfect power of self-expression in life,—but in comparison with what is beyond it, it is only a relative perfection. Or, it is the last step from which we can securely ascend into the absolute infinities which are the origin and the goal of the incarnating spirit.

For the Upanishad tells us that after the knowledge-self is possessed and all the lower selves have been drawn up into it, the last step of all—though one might ask, is it eternally the last or only the last practically conceivable or at all necessary for us now?—is to take up that also into the Bliss-Self and there complete the spiritual ascension. Ananda, the Bliss, is the essential nature of the spi-

rit ; there it finds its true self, its essential consciousness, the absolute power of its being. Therefore the soul's entry into the absolute, unlimited, unconditional bliss of the spirit is the infinite perfection and the infinite liberation. This bliss can be enjoyed indeed even on the lower planes where the *Purusha* plays with his modified and qualified Nature, on the plane of matter, on the plane of life, on the plane of mind as well as on or above the gnostic truth-plane of knowledge. For each of these principles contains in itself the whole potentiality of all the other six notes of our being and each plane of Nature can have its own perfection of these notes under its own conditions. Even the physical soul in man, the *annamaya purusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda either by a reflection of the Soul in physical Nature, its bliss, power and infinity, or by losing itself in the Self within : the result is either a glorified sleep of the physical mind in which the physical being forgets itself or else moves about like a thing inert in the hands of Nature, *jadavat*, like a leaf in the wind, or otherwise a state of pure and free irresponsibility of action, *bālavat*, a divine childhood. But this comes without the higher glories of knowledge and delight which belong to the same status upon a more exalted level ; it is an inert realisation of Sachchidananda in which there is no mastery of the Prakriti by the Purusha. So too the life soul in man, *prāṇamaya purusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul in universal Life or by losing itself in the Self within. Here again the result is either a state of sheer self-oblivion or else an action driven irresponsibly by the life nature, the great world-energy in its vitalistic dance, so that the outer being acts either in a God-possessed frenzy careless of itself and the world, *unmattavat*, or with an entire disregard of the conventions and proprieties of fitting human action, *pisāchavat*,—the divine maniac or

else the divine demoniac. Here too there is no mastery of nature, but only a joyful static possession by the Self within and an unregulated dynamic possession by the physical or the vital Nature without.

So too again the mind-soul in man, *manomaya puruṣa*, reflects and enters into the self of Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul as it mirrors itself in the nature of pure universal mind or by absorption in the Self within. Here there is either the cessation of mind and action or a desire-free unbound action, that of the soul alone in the world and careless of all human ties, the eremite soul, or that of the soul which lives in relations of pure love and ecstasy with all, the saint-soul. The mental being may, however, realise the Self in all three planes together, and then he is all these things at once or alternately or successively ; or he may transform the lower forms into manifestations of the higher state, the childlikeness, the inert irresponsibility, the divine madness and carelessness of all rules and proprieties of the ecstatic saint or the wandering eremite. Here too there is no mastery of its world-Nature by the soul, but a double possession, by the freedom and delight of the infinite soul within and without by the happy, natural and unregulated play of the mind-Nature. But since the mental being is capable of receiving the gnosis in a way in which the life soul and physical soul cannot receive it, with knowledge though only the limited knowledge of a mental response, he may to a certain extent govern by it his outer action. But the mind can arrive only at a compromise between the infinite within and the finite nature without ; it cannot pour the infinity of its inner being, power and bliss with any sense of fullness into its always inadequate external action : still it is content and free because it is the Lord within who takes up the responsibility of the action, the guidance and the consequence.

The gnostic soul, the *vijñānamaya puruṣa*, has the

fullness, the sense of plenitude of the Godhead in its action, the free, splendid and royal march of the Infinite transforming all life into a symbol of the eternal Light and the eternal Fire and the eternal Wine of the nectar,—knowledge, power, bliss. It possesses the infinite of the Self and the infinite of Nature. It does not so much lose as find its nature self in the Self of being; for while the other planes of the mental being are those of man finding God in himself and himself in God, the gñosis is rather God self-possessed in the human symbol. Therefore the gnostic soul does not so much reflect as identify itself with and possess the Soul in the truth-Nature. In the gñosis the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti as two separate powers complementary to each other,—the great truth of the Sankhya philosophy which is also the practical truth of our present natural being,—disappears in their biune entity. The Truth-being realises the Hara-Gauri * of the Indian symbolistic iconology. The truth-soul does not arrive at self-oblivion in the Infinite, but at eternal self-possession in the Infinite. Its action is not irregular, but a perfect self-control in an infinite freedom. For in the lower planes the soul is naturally subject to Nature and the regulating principle is found in the lower nature, so that all regulation depends on the acceptance of a strict subjection to the law of the finite. If the soul there simply withdraws into the infinite, it loses its natural centre from which all its external being was till then regulated and finds no other; the Nature dances in the gusts and falls of the universal energy, acting on the individual system rather than in that system, or strays in the wild steps of an irresponsible ecstasy. If on the other hand it moves towards the discovery of a divine centre of control through which the Infinite can consciously govern its action in the

* The biune body of the Lord and his Spouse, Ishwara and Shakti, the right half male, the left half female.

individual, it is moving towards the gnosis where that centre preexists. It is when it arrives in the gnosis that the Purusha becomes the master of the Nature, because force or will there is the exact counterpart, the perfect dynamis of the divine knowledge, and that knowledge is not merely the eye of the Witness but the immanent gaze of the Ishwara dwelling as the governing power, a power not to be hedged in or denied, in every impulsion and every action.

The gnosis does not indeed reject the realisation on the lower planes, but it possesses them under its own conditions. The gnostic soul is the child, but the king-child ; † for here is the royal and eternal childhood whose toys are the worlds and all universal Nature the garden of the playing. It takes up the condition of divine inertia, not that of the subject soul driven by Nature as the breath of the Lord, but of the Nature-Soul driven by the bliss of the mastering Purusha, so that in its biune being of Purusha-Prakriti it is as if a flaming Sun and body of divine Light self-carried in its orbit by its own inner consciousness and power at one with the universal. Its madness is the ecstasy of a supreme consciousness and power vibrating with an infinite sense of freedom and intensity in its divine life-movements, its action supra-rational and therefore to the rational mind, which has not the key, a colossal madness ; but yet this madness is the very method of the Lord of the worlds which no intellectual interpretation can fathom,—a dance this also, a whirl of mighty energies, but with the Master of the dance holding the hands of His energies and keeping them to the circles of his Rasa-lila. Nor is the gnostic soul bound any more than the divine demoniac by conventions and proprieties of the normal human life, the rules through which it makes some shift to accommodate itself with the dualities of the lower nature, guide itself among its contra-

† So Heraclitus, " The kingdom is of the child."

dictions, avoid its stumbling blocks, foot with gingerly care around its pitfalls. Its life is abnormal, free to all the hardships of a soul dealing fearlessly and even violently with Nature, but yet is all governed by the law of the Truth, by the law therefore of the self-possessed Knowledge, Love, Delight, Unity. It seems abnormal only because its rhythm is not measurable by the faltering beats of the mind.

If it is so, what then is the necessity of a still higher step and what difference is there between the soul in gnosis and the soul in the Bliss? None essentially, but still a difference, almost a reversal in position. On all planes the Ananda can be found, because everywhere it exists and is the same; but when found in the lower planes, it is by a sort of dissolution into it of the pure mind or the life-sense or the physical consciousness; and it is, as it were, itself diluted by the dissolved form and held in the dilution. The gnosis has on the contrary a dense light of essential consciousness* in which the fullness of the Ananda can be possessed. When its form is dissolved into the Ananda itself, it undergoes a change by which the soul is carried up into its last and absolute freedom; for it casts itself into the absolute being of the spirit and its entirely self-existent bliss. The gnosis has that indeed as the conscious source of all its activities, possesses it as the base of its being, but in its action it stands forth from it as its operation, the rhythmical working of its activities. Gnosis is the divine Knowledge-Will of the divine Consciousness-Force, Prakriti-Purusha, full of the delight of the divine being; but in the Ananda the knowledge goes back into pure self-consciousness, the will dissolves into pure transcendent force, both are taken up into pure delight of being. What was the basis of the gnostic being, is the self-field of the Ananda.

* Chidghana.

This takes place because there is here completed the transition to the absolute unity of which the gnosis is the decisive step, but not the final resting-place. In the gnosis the soul is aware of its infinity and lives in it, yet it lives also in a working centre for the individual play of the Infinite. It realises its unity with all beings, but it keeps a distinction without difference by which it can have also the contact with them,—that distinction for the joy of contact which in the mind becomes not only difference, but in its self-experience division from our other selves, in its spiritual being a loss of self one with us in others and a reaching after that, in life a compromise between egoistic self-absorption and a blind seeking out for the lost unity. Even in its infinite consciousness, the gnostic soul creates a sort of voluntary limitation; it has even its particular luminous aura of being, though beyond that it identifies itself with all being. But in the Ananda all is reversed. The centre disappears; in the bliss nature there is no centre, nor any voluntary or imposed circumference, but all is one equal being. The bliss soul finds and feels itself everywhere; it has no mansion, is *aniketa*, or has the all for its mansion, or, if it likes, it has all things for its many mansions. All other selves are entirely its own selves, in action as well as in being; the joy of contact in oneness becomes altogether the joy of absolute identity. Existence is no longer formulated in the terms of the Knowledge, because the known and knowledge and the knower are wholly one self and there is no need of what we call knowledge. All the consciousness is of bliss of being, all power is the power of bliss, all forms and activities are forms and activities of bliss. In this absolute truth of its being the soul lives, here deformed by contrary phenomena, there brought back and transfigured into their reality.

The soul lives, it is not abolished. For on every plane of our being the same principle holds; the soul

may fall asleep in a trance of self-absorption, may live in the highest glory of its own plane,—for the Ananda it is the Anandaloka, Brahmaloaka, Vaikuntha, Goloka of various Indian systems,—or may turn upon the lower worlds to fill them with its own light and power. The Divine on the Ananda plane is not incapable of the world-play or self-debarred from it. On the contrary, as the Upanishad insists, the Ananda is the true creative principle ; from this divine Bliss all takes birth, * in it all is preexistent as absolute truth of being which the Vijnāna brings out and subjects to voluntary limitation by the Idea and the law of the Idea. But in the Ananda all law ceases and there is an absolute freedom. It is above all principles and the enjoyer of all principles in one and the same motion, above all gunas and the enjoyer of infinite gunas, above all forms and the enjoyer of all forms. That is what the spirit transcendent and universal is, and to be one in bliss with the transcendent and universal spirit is for the soul to be that and nothing less. Necessarily, since there is here the absolute and the play of absolutes, it is ineffable by any of the conceptions of our mind or signs of the phenomenal or ideal realities of which mind-conceptions are the figures in our intelligence ; for these realities are themselves only relative symbols of those absolutes. The symbol may give an idea of the thing itself, but when we get beyond the thing which it symbolises, we transcend ideas and transcend even the ideal realities.

Our first absorbing impulse when we become aware of something entirely beyond what we are and know and are powerfully attracted by it, is to get away from the present actuality into that higher reality. The extreme form of this attraction is the condemnation of the lower as an illusion and the aspiration to *laya* or *nirvāna* in the be-

* Therefore the world of the Ananda is called the Janaloka, in the double sense of birth and delight.

yond,—the passion for dissolution, immersion, extinction. But the real *laya* or *nirvāṇa* is the release of all that is bindingly characteristic of the lower into the larger being of the higher reality. We find in the end that not only is the higher reality the cause of all the rest, but that it embraces and exists in all the rests ; only, by possessing it, all is transformed in our soul-experience into the superior value. Finally, we get to the absolute and its supreme values which are the absolutes of all. We then lose the passion for release, *mumukshutva*, which till then actuated us, because we have got to that which is ever free and is neither attracted into attachment by what binds us now nor afraid of what to us seems to be bondage. Without the loss of this passion there is no absolute liberation. The Divine attracts the souls by various lures which are all of them its relative conceptions of bliss ; all are the soul's way of seeking for the Ananda. First it is the lure of an earthly reward of material, intellectual, ethical or other joy in the terrestrial mind and body ; secondly, there is the hope of a heavenly bliss, much greater than these earthly rewards, but the conception of heaven rises in altitude and purity till it reaches the pure idea of the eternal presence of God or delightful union with Him ; thirdly, we get the subtlest of all lures, escape from worldly or heavenly joys and sorrows and from all phenomenal things, a Nirvana, a self-dissolution in the Absolute, the Ananda of cessation and peace. But in the end all these toys of the mind have to be transcended, the fear of birth and the desire of escape from birth have entirely to fall away from us. For, as the Upanishad declares, the soul realising oneness has no sorrow or shrinking and the soul realising the bliss of the Brahman, has nothing to fear from anything whatsoever. Fear and desire and sorrow are diseases of the mind born of its sense of division and limitation. But the Ananda is free from all these maladies.

The bliss soul is not bound by birth or by non-

birth, by desire of the Knowledge or fear of the Ignorance. It has already had and transcended the Knowledge ; it can play with the Ignorance without being imbued with it ; it can descend into birth without being chained to the revolutions of the wheel of Nature. It knows besides the purpose and law of the birth-series. That law is for the soul to rise from plane to plane and substitute always the rule of the higher for the rule of the lower play even down to the material field. The bliss-soul does not disdain either to help that ascent from above or to descend down the stairs of God into the material birth and there contribute the power of its own bliss nature to the upward pull of the divine forces. Man, generally, cannot indeed ascend yet to the bliss nature ; he has still to secure himself on the higher mental altitudes, to ascend from them to the gnosis ; but he can receive its power into his soul in greater or less degree. In that lie his highest capacities.

And what would be the bliss nature in man ? First, to be one with all beings in bliss of being ; and since love is the human symbol of bliss-unity, to approach this oneness by the way of universal love, a human love at first, a divine love afterwards. Secondly, to be one in bliss with all the world-play and banish from the soul the sorrow and fear, the hunger and pain of the darkened mental being, Thirdly, to get that power of the bliss-freedom in which all the conflicting principles of our being shall be unified in their absolute values ; so that all evil shall perforce become good, the universal beauty of the All-béautiful take possession, every darkness be converted into a pregnant glory of the light and the discords which the mind creates between Truth and Good and Beauty. Power and Love and Knowledge disappear on their eternal summit of unity.

The Purusha in mind, life and body is divided from Nature and subject to her dualities ; in the gnosis he is

biune with her and finds as master their reconciliation and harmony by their essential unity ; in the Ânanda he is one with the Prakriti and no longer only biune with her. There is no longer the play of Nature with the soul ; but all is the play of the soul with itself in its own nature of bliss. This is the supreme mystery, the highest secret, simple to itself, however difficult and complex to our mental conceptions. It is the free infinity of the self-delight of Sachchidananda. The play of the divine child, the *râs lîla* of the Lover are its mystic soul-symbols.

Essays on the Gita

THE DIVINE BIRTH AND DIVINE WORKS

(2)

We see that the mystery of the divine Incarnation in man, the assumption by the Godhead of the human type and the human nature, is in the view of the Gita only the other side of the eternal mystery of human birth itself which is always in its essence, though not in its phenomenal appearance, even such a miraculous assumption. The eternal and universal self of every human being is God ; even his personal self is a part of the Godhead, *mamai-vâṅsha*,—not a fraction or fragment, surely, since we cannot think of God as broken up into little pieces, but a partial consciousness of the one Consciousness, a partial Power of the one Power, a partial enjoyment of world-being by the one and universal Delight of being, and therefore in manifestation or, as we say, in Nature a limited and finite being of the one infinite and illimitable being. The stamp of that limitation is an ignorance by which he forgets, not only the Godhead from which he came forth, but the Godhead which is always within him, there living in the secret heart of his own nature, burning like a veiled Fire on the inner altar in his own temple-house of human consciousness.

He is ignorant because there is upon the eyes of his soul and all its organs the seal of that Nature, Prakriti,

Maya, by which he has been put forth into manifestation out of God's eternal being ; she has minted him like a coin out of the precious metal of the divine substance, but overlaid with a strong coating of the alloy of her phenomenal qualities, stamped with her own stamp and mark of animal humanity, and although the secret sign of the Godhead is there, it is at first indistinguishable and always with difficulty decipherable, not to be really discovered except by that initiation into the mystery of our own being which distinguishes a Godward from an earthward humanity. In the Avatar, the divinely-born Man, the real substance shines through the coating ; the mark of the seal is there only for form, the vision is that of the secret Godhead, the power of the life is that of the secret Godhead, and it breaks through the seals of the assumed human nature ; the sign of the Godhead, an inner soul-sign, not outward, not physical, stands out legible for all to read who care to see or who can see ; for the Asuric nature is always blind to these things, it sees the body and not the soul, the external being and not the internal, the mask and not the Person. In the ordinary human birth the Nature-aspect of the universal Divine assuming humanity prevails ; in the incarnation the God-aspect of the same phenomenon takes its place. In the one he allows the human nature to take possession of his partial being and to dominate it ; in the other he takes possession of his partial type of being and its nature and divinely dominates it. Not by evolution or ascent like the ordinary man, the Gita seems to tell us, not by a growing into the divine birth, but by a direct descent into the stuff of humanity and a taking up of its moulds.

It is to assist that ascent or evolution that he descends ; that the Gita makes very clear. It is, we might say, to exemplify the possibility of the Divine manifest in the human being, so that man may see what that is and take courage to grow into it. It is also to leave the

influence of that manifestation vibrating in the earth-nature and the soul of that manifestation presiding over its upward endeavour. It is to give a spiritual mould of divine manhood into which the seeking soul of the human being can cast itself. It is to give a dharma, a religion—not a mere creed, but a method of inner and outer living,—a way, a rule and law of self-moulding by which he can grow towards divinity. It is too, since this growth, this ascent is no mere isolated and individual phenomenon, but like all in the divine world-activities a collective business, a work and the work for the race, to assist the human march, to hold it together in its great crises, to break the forces of the downward gravitation when they grow too insistent, to uphold or restore the great dharma of the Godward law in man's nature, to prepare even, however far off, the kingdom of God, the victory of the seekers of light and perfection, *sâdhûnam*, and the overthrow of those who fight for the continuance of the evil and the darkness. All these are recognised objects of the descent of the Avatar, and it is usually by his work that the mass of men seek to distinguish him and for that that they are ready to worship him. It is only the spiritual who see that this external Avatarhood is a sign, in the symbol of a human life, of the eternal inner Godhead making himself manifest in the field of their own human mentality and corporeality so that they can grow into unity with that and be possessed by it. The divine manifestation of a Christ, Krishna, Buddha in external humanity has for its inner truth the same manifestation of the eternal Avatar within in our own inner humanity. That which has been done in the outer human life of earth, may be repeated in the inner life of all human beings.

This is the object of the incarnation, but what is the method? First, we have the rational or minimising view of Avatarhood which sees in it only an extraordinary manifestation of the diviner qualities moral, intellectual

and dynamic by which average humanity is exceeded. In this idea there is a certain truth. The Avatar is at the same time the Vibhûti. This Krishna who in his divine inner being is the Godhead in a human form, is in his outer human being the leader of his age, the great man of the Vrishnis. This is from the point of view of the Nature, not of the soul. The Divine manifests himself through infinite qualities of his nature and the intensity of the manifestation is measured by their power and their achievement. The *vibhuti* of the Divine is therefore, impersonally, the manifest power of his quality, it is his out-flowing, in whatever form, of Knowledge, Energy, Love, Strength and the rest ; personally, it is the form or the animate being in whom this power is achieved and does its great works. A preeminence in this inner and outer achievement, a greater power of divine quality, an effective energy is always the sign. The human *vibhûti* is the hero of the race's struggle towards divine achievement, the hero in the Carlylean sense of heroism, a power of God in man. "I am Vasudeva (Krishna) among the Vrishnis," says the Lord in the Gita, "Dhananjaya (Arjuna) among the Pandavas, Vyasa among the sages, the seer-poet Ushanas among the seer-poets," the first in each category, the greatest of each group, the most powerfully representative of the qualities and works in which its characteristic soul-power manifests itself. This heightening of the powers of the being is a very necessary step in the progress of the divine manifestation. Every great man who rises above our average level, raises by that very fact our common humanity ; he is a living assurance of our divine possibilities, a promise of the Godhead, a glow of the divine Light and a breath of the divine Power.

It is this truth which lies behind the natural human tendency to the deification of great minds and heroic characters ; it comes out clearly enough in the Indian habit of mind which easily sees a partial (*anusha*) Avatar

in great saints, teachers, founders, or most significantly in the belief of southern Vaishnavas that some of their saints were incarnations of the symbolic living weapons of Vishnu,—for that is what all great spirits are, living powers and weapons of the Divine in the upward march and battle. This idea is innate and inevitable in any mystic or spiritual view of life which does not draw an inexorable line between the being and nature of the Divine and our human being and nature ; it is the sense of the divine in humanity. But still the Vibhuti is not the Avatar ; otherwise Arjuna, Vyasa, Ushanas would be Avatars as well as Krishna, even if in a less degree of the power of Avatarhood. The divine quality is not enough ; there must be the inner consciousness of the Lord and Self governing the human nature by his divine presence. The heightening of the power of the qualities is part of the becoming, *bhūtagrāma*, an ascent in the ordinary manifestation ; in the Avatar there is the special manifestation, the divine birth from above, the eternal and universal Godhead descended into a form of individual humanity, *ātmānam srijāmi*, and conscious not only behind the veil but in the outward nature.

There is an intermediary idea, a more mystical view of Avatarhood which supposes that a human soul calls down this descent into himself and is either possessed by the divine consciousness or becomes an effective reflection or channel of it. This view rests upon certain truths of spiritual experience. The divine birth in man, his ascent, is itself a growing of the human into the divine consciousness, and in its intensest culmination is a losing of the separate self in that. The soul merges its individuality in an infinite and universal being or loses it in the heights of a transcendent being ; it becomes one with the Self, the Brahman, the Divine or, as it is sometimes more absolutely put, becomes the one Self, the Brahman, the Divine. The Gita itself speaks of the soul becoming

the Brahman, *brahmabhûta*, and of its thereby dwelling in the Lord, in Krishna, but it does not, it must be marked, speak of it as becoming the Lord or the Purushotama, though it does declare that the Jiva himself is always Ishwara, the partial being of the Lord, *mamaivânshah*. For this greatest union, this highest becoming is still part of the ascent ; while it is the divine birth to which every Jiva arrives, it is not the descent of the Godhead, not Avatarhood, but at most Buddhahood according to the doctrine of the Buddhists, it is the soul awakened from its present mundane individuality into an infinite superconsciousness. That need not carry with it either the inner consciousness or the characteristic action of the Avatar.

On the other hand, this entering into the divine consciousness may be attended by a reflex action of the Divine entering or coming forward into the human parts of our being, pouring himself into the nature, the activity, the mentality, the corporeality even of the man ; and that may well be at least a partial Avatarhood. The Lord stands in the heart, says the Gita,—by which it means of course the heart of the subtle being, the nodus of the emotions, sensations, mental consciousness, where the individual Purusha also is seated ;—but he stands there veiled, enveloped by his Maya. But above, on a plane within us but now superconscious to us, called heaven by the ancient mystics, the Lord and the Jiva stand together revealed as of one essence of being, the Father and the Son of certain symbolisms, the Divine Being and the divine Man who comes forth from Him born of the higher divine Nature, * the virgin Mother, *parâprakriti*, *parâ Mâyâ*, into the lower or human nature. This seems to be

* In the Buddhist legend the name of the mother of Buddha makes the symbolism clear ; in the Christian the symbol seems to have been attached by a familiar mythopoeic process to the actual human mother of Jesus of Nazareth.

the inner doctrine of the Christian incarnation ; in its Trinity the Father is above in this inner Heaven ; the Son or supreme Prakriti become Jiva of the Gita descends as the divine Man upon earth, in the mortal body ; the Holy Spirit, pure Self, Brahmic consciousness is that which makes them one and that also in which they communicate ; for we hear of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus and it is the same descent which brings down the powers of the higher consciousness into the simple humanity of the Apostles.

But on the other hand the higher divine consciousness of the Purushottama may itself descend into the humanity and that of the Jiva disappear into it. This is said by his contemporaries of the occasional transfiguration of Chaitanya when he who in his normal consciousness was only the lover and devotee of the Lord and rejected all deification, became in these abnormal moments the Lord himself and so spoke and acted, with all the outflowing light and love and power of the divine Presence. Supposing this to be the normal condition, the human receptacle to be constantly no more than a vessel of this divine Presence and divine Consciousness, we should have the Avatar according to this intermediary idea of the incarnation. That easily recommends itself as possible to our human notions ; for if the human being can elevate himself so as to feel an unity with the being of the Divine and a mere channel of its consciousness, light, power, love, his own will and personality lost in that will and that being,—and this is a recognised spiritual status,—then there is no inherent impossibility of the reflex action of that Will, Being, Power, Love, Light, Consciousness occupying the whole personality of the human Jiva. And this would not be merely an ascent of our humanity into the divine birth and the divine nature, but a descent of the divine Purusha into humanity, an Avatar.

The Gita, however, goes much farther. It speaks

clearly of the Lord himself being born ; Krishna speaks of his many births that are past and makes it clear by his language that it is not merely the receptive human being but the Divine of whom he makes this affirmation, because he uses the very language of the Creator, the same language which he will employ when he has to describe his creation of the world. "Although I am the unborn Lord of creatures, *I* create (loose forth) my *self* by my *Maya*," presiding over the actions of my *Prakriti*. Here there is no question of the Lord and the human *jiva* or of the Father and the Son, the divine Man, but only of the Lord and his *Prakriti*. The Divine descends by his own *Prakriti* into birth in its human form and type bringing into it the divine Consciousness and the divine Power, though consenting, though willing to act in the form, type, mould of humanity, and he governs its actions in the body as the indwelling and over-dwelling Soul, *adhi-sthâya*. From above he governs always, for so he governs all nature, the human included ; from within also, he governs all nature, but hidden, and the difference here is that he is manifest : the nature is conscious of the divine Presence as the lord, the Inhabitant, and it is not by his secret will from above, "the will of the Father which is in heaven," but by his quite direct and apparent will that he moves the nature. And here there seems to be no room for the human intermediary ; for it is by resort to his own nature, *prakṛitīm svām*, and not that of the *jiva* that the Lord of all existence thus takes upon himself the human birth.

This doctrine is obviously a hard thing for the human reason to accept ; and for obvious reasons. First, the Avatar is always a dual phenomenon of divinity and humanity ; the Divine takes upon himself the human nature with all its outward limitations and makes them the circumstances, means, instruments of the divine consciousness and the divine power, a vessel of the divine

birth and the divine works. Otherwise the object of the Avatar's descent is not fulfilled ; for that object is precisely to show that the human birth with all its limitations can be made such a means and instrument of the divine birth and divine works, precisely to show that the human type of consciousness can be compatible with the divine essence of consciousness made manifest, can be converted into its vessel, drawn into nearer conformity with it by a change of its mould and a heightening of its powers of light and love and strength and purity ; and to show also how it can be done. If the Avatar were to act in an entirely supernormal fashion, this object would not be fulfilled. A merely supernormal or miraculous Avatar would be a meaningless absurdity ; not that there need be an entire absence of the use of supernormal powers such as Christ's so-called miracles of healing, for the use of supernormal powers is quite a possibility of human nature ; but there need not be that at all, nor in any case is it the root of the matter, nor would it at all do if the life were nothing else but a display of supernormal fireworks. The Avatar does not come as a thaumaturgic magician, but as the divine leader of humanity and the exemplar of a divine humanity. Even human sorrow and physical suffering he must use so as to show, first, how that suffering may be a means of redemption,—as did Christ,—secondly, to show how, having been assumed by the divine Soul in the human nature, it can also be overcome in the same nature,—as did Buddha. The rationalist who would have cried to Christ, “ If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross,” or points out sagely that the Avatar was not divine because he died and died too by disease,—as a dog dieth,—knows not what he is saying : for he has missed the root of the whole matter. Even, the Avatar of sorrow and suffering must come before there can be the Avatar of divine joy ; the human limitation must be assumed in order to show how it can be overcome ; and the way

and the extent of the overcoming, whether internal only or external also, depends upon the stage of the human advance ; it must not be done by a non-human miracle.

The question then arises, how is this human mind and body assumed ? For they were not created suddenly and all of a piece, but by some kind of evolution, physical or spiritual or both. No doubt, the descent of the Avatar, like the divine birth from the other side, is essentially a spiritual phenomenon, as is shown by the Gita's *âtmanam srijâmi*, it is a soul-birth ; but still there is here an attendant physical birth. How then were this human mind and body of the Avatar created ? If we suppose that the body is created by hereditary evolution, by inconscient Nature and its immanent Life-spirit without the intervention of the individual soul, the matter becomes simple. A physical and mental body is prepared fit for the divine incarnation by a pure or great heredity and the descending Godhead takes possession of it. But the Gita in this very passage applies the doctrine of reincarnation, boldly enough, to the Avatar himself, and in the usual theory of reincarnation the re-incarnating soul by its past spiritual and psychological evolution itself determines and in a way prepares its own mental and physical body. The soul prepares its own body, the body is not prepared for it without any reference to the soul. Are we then to suppose an eternal Avatar himself evolving his own fit mental and physical body according to the needs and pace of the human evolution and so appearing from age to age, *yuge yuge* ? In some such spirit some would interpret the ten incarnations of Vishnu, first in animal forms, then in the animal man, then in the dwarf man-soul, Vamana, the violent Asuric man, Rama of the axe, the divinely-natured man, Rama, the awakened spiritual man, Buddha, finally the complete divine manhood, Krishna,—for the last Avatar, Kalki, only accomplishes the work Krishna began, fulfilling in power the great struggle which the ninth Avatar prepared

in all its potentialities. It is a tremendous assumption to our modern mentality, but the language of the Gita seems to demand it. Or since the Gita does not expressly solve the problem, we may solve it in some other way of our own, as that the body is prepared by the Jiva but assumed from birth by the godhead or that it is prepared by one of the four Manus, *chaturâro manavañ*, of the Gita, the spiritual Fathers of every human mind and body. This is going far into the mystic field from which the modern reason is still averse ; but once we admit Avatarhood, we have already entered into it and, once entered, may as well tread in it with firm footsteps.

There the Gita's doctrine of Avatarhood stands. We have had to advert to it at length in this aspect of its method, as we did to the question of its possibility, because it is necessary to look at it and face the difficulties which the reasoning mind of man is likely to offer to it. It is true that the physical Avatarhood does not fill a large place in the Gita, but still it does occupy a definite place in the chain of its teachings and is implied in the whole scheme, the very framework being the Avatar leading the *vibhûti*, the man who has risen to the greatest heights of mere manhood, to the divine birth and divine works. No doubt, too, the inner descent of the Godhead to raise the human soul into himself is the main thing,—it is the inner Christ, Krishna or Buddha that matters. But just as the outer life is of immense importance for the inner development, so the external Avatarhood is of no mean importance for this great spiritual manifestation. The consummation in the physical symbol assists the growth of the inner reality ; afterwards the inner reality expresses itself with greater power in a more perfect symbolisation of itself in the outer life. Between these two acting and reaching upon each other the manifestation of the Divine in humanity has elected to move in the cycles of its consummation.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

III

THE CONQUEST OF SELF

TO RENOUNCE COVETING.

- 1-2 There is no fire that can equal desire.—Coveting is without end, but contentment is a supreme felicity ; therefore the wise recognise no treasures upon the earth except contentment alone.
- 3 The world is carried away in the torrent of desire, in its eddies there is no soil of safety. Wisdom alone is a solid raft and meditation a firm foothold.
- 4 From coveting is born grief, from coveting is born fear. To be free utterly from desire is to know neither fear nor sorrow.
- 5 When a man shakes from him the clinging yoke of desire, affliction drops away from him little by little as drops of water glide from a lotus-leaf.—1,
- 6 such as I am, belong not to myself...A man should think thus, "All earth is mine," or thus, "All this

1) Dhammapada.— 2) Mahabharata.— 3) Fo-shu-hing-tsan king.— 4) Dhammapada — 5) id — 6) Mahabharata.

belongs to others just as well as to myself ;” such a man is never afflicted.

- 7 Let him repulse lust and coveting, the disciple who
8 would lead a holy life.—If a man covets nothing,
 how shall he fail to do what is just and good ?
9 The body may be covered with jewels and yet the
 heart may have mastered all its covetings.

The Psychology of Social Development

XVI

In all the higher powers of his life man may be said to be seeking, blindly enough, for God ; to get at the divine and eternal in himself and the world and to harmonise them, to put his being and his life in tune with the Infinite reveals itself as his aim and his destiny. He sets out to arrive at his highest self and his largest and most perfect self, and the moment he at all touches upon it, this self in him appears to be one with some great self of Truth and of Good and Beauty in the world to which we give the name of God. To get at this as a spiritual presence is the aim of religion, to grow into harmony with its eternal nature of right, love, strength and purity is the aim of ethics, to enjoy and mould ourselves into the harmony of its eternal beauty and delight is the aim and consummation of our aesthetic being, to know and to live according to its eternal principles of truth is the end of science and philosophy.

But all this seems to be something above our normal and ordinary being ; it is something into which we strive to grow, but it does not seem to be the normal stuff, the natural being of the daily life of the individual and the society. That life is practical and not idealistic ; it is

concerned not with good, beauty, spiritual experience, the higher truth, but with interests, physical needs, desires, vital necessities. This is real to it, all the rest is a little shadowy; this belongs to its ordinary labour, all the rest to its leisure; this to the stuff of which it is made, all the rest to its parts of ornament and dispensable improvement. To all that rest society gives a place, but its heart is not there. It accepts ethics as a bond and an influence, but it does not live for ethical good, its real gods are vital need and utility; it governs partly its life by ethical laws because otherwise vital utility in seeking its own satisfaction through many egoistic individuals would clash with and destroy itself, but it does not try to make its life entirely ethical. It concerns itself still less with beauty, only indeed as an embellishment and an amusement, a satisfaction and pastime of the eye and ear and mind; it does not try to make its life a thing of beauty. It allows religion its fixed place and portion, on holy days and in the church or temple, at the end of life when age and the approach of death call the attention forcibly away from this life to other life, at fixed times in the week or the day when it thinks it right for a moment to pause in the affairs of the world and remember God; but to make the whole of life a religion, a remembering of God and seeking after him, is a thing that is not really done even in societies which like the Indian boast that this is their aim and principle. It admits philosophy in a still more remote fashion; and if nowadays it eagerly seeks after science, it does that because science helps prodigiously the satisfaction of its vital desires, needs and interests; it does not seek after an entirely scientific life any more than after an entirely ethical life. A more complete effort in any of these directions it leaves to the individual, to the few, and to individuals of a special type, the saint, the ethical man, the artist, the thinker, the man of religion; it gives them a place, does some

homage to them, but for itself it is content to seek after its own inherent principle of vital satisfaction, vital necessity and utility, vital efficiency.

The reason is that here we get to another power of our being which is different from the ethical, aesthetic, rational and religious ; one which, even if we recognize it as lower in the scale, still insists on its reality and has not only the right to exist but the right to satisfy itself and be fulfilled : it is indeed the primary power, it is the base of our existence upon earth, it is that which the others take as their starting-point and their foundation. This is the life-power in us, the vitalistic, the dynamic being. Its whole principle and aim is to be, to assert our existence, to increase, to expand, to possess, and to enjoy. Its primary terms are being and power : Life itself is being trying to express itself in terms of force, and human life is therefore the human being trying to impress himself on the world with the greatest possible force and intensity and extension. First, to live merely and make for himself a place in the world, for himself and his species, secondly, having made it to possess, produce and enjoy with an ever-widening scope, finally, to spread himself over all the earth-life and dominate it, this is and must be his first practical business. It is what the Darwinians have tried to express by their notion of the struggle for life ; but the struggle is not merely to last and live, but to increase, enjoy and possess ; and it becomes in its method not only a principle and instinct of egoism, but a principle of association. It has two instincts, one of individualistic self-assertion, the other of collective self-assertion ; it works by strife, but also by mutual assistance and united effort ; it uses two forms of action, therefore, which seem to be contradictory but are in fact coexistent, competitive endeavour and cooperative endeavour. From this dynamism of life the whole structure of human society has come into being and upon the sustained and vigorous action of

this dynamism the continuance, vigour and growth of all human societies depends. If this life-force in them fails, all begins to languish, stagnate and finally move towards disintegration.

The European idea of society is founded upon the primary and predominant part played by this vital dynamism in the formation and maintenance of society ; for the European, ever since the Teutonic mind and temperament took possession of western Europe, has been fundamentally the practical, dynamic and kinetic man, vitalistic in the very marrow of his thought and being. The rest has been the fine flower of his life and culture, this has been its root and stalk ;, and in modern times this truth of his temperament has come to the surface and triumphed over the traditions of Christian piety and Latinistic culture in the great economic and political civilisation of the nineteenth century. Life and society consist, for the practical human instincts, in three activities, the domestic and social life of man,—social in the sense of his customary relations with others in the community both as an individual and as a member of one family among many,—his economical activities as a producer, wealth-getter and consumer, his political status and action. Society is the organisation of these three things and, fundamentally, for the practical human being it is nothing more. Learning and science, ethics, aesthetics, religion are assigned their place in it as aids to life, for its guidance and betterment, for its embellishment, for the consolation of its labours, difficulties and sorrows.

The ancients held a different, indeed a diametrically opposite view ; they recognised the importance of the primary activities, in Asia the social most, in Europe the political,—as every society must which at all means to live and flourish,—but they were not to them primary in the higher sense of the word ; they were man's first business, but not his chief business. The ancients regarded this life

as an occasion for the development of the rational, the ethical, the aesthetic, the religious being. Greece and Rome laid stress on the three first, Asia went farther and made these also subordinate, looked upon them as stepping-stones to a religious consummation. Greece and Rome were proudest of their art, poetry, philosophy, even more than of their political liberty or greatness, Asia of these three and of her social organisation, but much more of her saints, religious thinkers and spiritual men ; the modern world is proud of its economical organisation, of its political liberty, order and progress, of the mechanism, comfort and ease of its social and domestic life and of its science, but of science in its application to practical life, its railways, telegraphs, steamships and the other thousand and one discoveries and inventions which help it to master the physical world. That marks the whole difference in the attitude.

On this a great deal hangs ; for if the practical and vitalistic view of life and society is the right one, if society merely exists for the maintenance, comfort, vital happiness and efficiency of the species, then our idea that life is a seeking for God and for the highest self and that society must also make that its principle, cannot stand. Modern society, at any rate in its self-conscious aim, is anything but that, whatever may be the splendour of its achievement ; it acknowledges only two gods, life and practical reason organised under the name of science. Therefore on this great primary principle we must look with especial care to see what it is in its appearance and its reality. Its appearance is familiar enough ; for it is the very stuff and form of our everyday life. Its ideals are first the physical good and vitalistic well-being of the individual, satisfaction of his desire for bodily health, long life, comfort, luxury, wealth, amusement, recreation, the expenditure of his dynamic force in remunerative work and production and, as the higher flame-spires of this energy, crea-

tions and conquests of various kinds, war, travel, adventure, colonisation. Usually all this takes as its cadre the family, the society, the nation ; but still in its primary impulse it is individualistic and makes family, social and national life a means for the greater satisfaction of the individual.

In the family he seeks for the satisfaction of his vital instinct of possession, as well as for the joy of companionship, and his other vital instinct of self-reproduction ; possession of wife, servants, house, wealth, estates ; the reproduction of himself and the prolongation of his activities, gains and possessions in his children ; incidentally the vital pleasures and the pleasures of emotion and affection to which the domestic life gives scope. In society he looks about for a larger expansion of himself and his instincts ; a wider field of companionship, associated effort and production, errant or gregarious pleasure, satisfied emotion, stirred sensation and regular amusement are the advantages which attach him to social existence. In the nation he finds a means for the play of a still larger sense of power and expansion ; where he can, fame, preeminence, leadership, the sense of an effective action on a small or a large scale, in a small or a large field of activity ; where he cannot have this, still a share of some kind in the pride, power and splendour of a great collective activity and vital expansion. In all this there is primarily at work the individualist principle of the vital instinct in which the competitive side of the instinct associates with the cooperative but predominates over it. Carried to an excess it becomes the ideal of the arrivist, to whom family, society and nation are not so much a sympathetic field as a ladder to be climbed, a prey to be devoured, a thing to be conquered and dominated. In extreme cases it reverts to a primitive anti-social feeling and creates the nomad, the adventurer, the ranger of wilds, or the pure solitary,—solitary not from any intellectual or spi-

ritual impulse, but because society, once an instrument, has become a prison and a burden, an oppressive cramping of his expansion, a denial of breathing-space and elbow-room. But these cases grow rarer, now that the ubiquitous tentacles of modern society take hold everywhere ; soon there will be no place of refuge left for either the nomad or the solitary, not even perhaps the Sahara desert or the Himalayas. Even perhaps the refuge of seclusion may be taken from us by a collectivist society bent upon making its pragmatic, economic, dynamic most of every individual "cell" of its organisation.

For this growing collectivist or cooperative tendency is the second instinct of the vital or practical being in man. It shows itself first in the family ideal by which the individual first subordinates himself and finds his vital satisfaction and practical account, not in his own predominant individuality, but in the life of a larger vital ego. This ideal played a large part in the old aristocratic views of life, especially in the ancient Indian idea of the *kula* and the *kuladharma*, and in later India it was at the root of the joint-family system, which was the economic base of mediaeval Hinduism. Its grossest Vaishya form has been the ideal of the British domestic Philistine, the idea of man born here to follow a trade or profession, marry, procreate a family, earn his living, succeed reasonably or else make as much wealth as possible, enjoy for a space and then die, having done his whole business and essential duty in life,—this apparently being the end for which man with all his divine possibilities was born ! But in whatever form, however this grossness may be refined or toned down, whatever ethical or religious conceptions may be superadded, always the family is essentially practical, vitalistic and economic in its whole being. In its natural form it is simply the larger vital ego and vital organism which takes up the individual and assumes his place as the competitive unit, while it accepts and uses

society for its field and means of continuance, vital satisfaction, well-being, aggrandisement and enjoyment. But this unit also can be induced by the cooperative instinct in life to subordinate itself to the society, which is again a still larger vital ego taking up both the individual and the family and using them for the collective satisfaction of its vital needs, claims, interests, aggrandisement, well-being, enjoyment. The individual and family consent for the same reason that induced the individual to take on himself the yoke of the family, because they find their account in this larger vital life and have the instinct in it of their own larger growth and satisfaction. The society is, still more than the family, essentially economic in its aims, and this is evident in the predominantly economic character of modern ideas of Socialism which are the full flowering of this instinct of collective life. But since it also is one competitive unit among many of its kind, and since its relations with them are mainly hostile, competitive and not cooperative, the political character is necessarily added and we have the nation or State. It is perfectly natural therefore that the development of the collective and cooperative idea of society should culminate at first in a huge, often a monstrous overgrowth of the vitalistic, economical and political ideal of life, society and civilisation.

What account are the higher parts of man's being which more openly tend to the growth of his divine nature, to make with this vital instinct or with its gigantic modern developments? Obviously, their first impulse must be to take hold of and dominate them; but when they find that here is a power apart, as persistent as themselves, seeking a satisfaction *per se*, accepting their impress to a certain extent, but not altogether and, as it were, unwillingly, partially, unsatisfactorily,—what then? We often find that ethics and religion especially, when they find themselves in a constant conflict with the vital

instincts, the dynamic life-power in man, proceed to an attitude of almost complete hostility and seek to damn them in idea and repress them in fact. To the vital instinct for wealth and well-being they oppose the ideal of a chill and austere poverty ; to the vital instinct for pleasure the ideal not only of self-denial, but of absolute mortification ; to the vital instinct for health and ease the contempt, disgust and neglect of the body ; to the vital instinct for incessant action and creation the ideal of calm and inaction, passivity, contemplation ; to the vital instinct for power, expansion and conquest the ideal of humility, self-abasement, submission, meek harmlessness, docility in suffering ; to the vital instinct of sex on which depends the continuance of the species, the ideal of an unrepudative chastity and celibacy ; to the social and family instinct the anti-social ideal of the ascetic, the monk, the solitary, the world-shunning saint. From discipline and subordination they proceed to mortification, which means when translated the putting to death of the vital instincts, and declare that life itself is an illusion to be escaped from or a kingdom of the flesh, the world and the devil,—accepting thus the claim of the unenlightened and undisciplined life itself that it is not and is never meant to be the kingdom of God.

Up to a certain point this recoil has its uses and may easily, by *tapasya*, by the law of energy increasing through compression, develop for a time a new vigour in the life of the society. But beyond a certain point it tends, not to kill, for that is impossible, but to discourage and render inert, feeble, narrow along with the vital instincts the indispensable life-energy of which they are the play. No society wholly dominated by this denial of the life dynamism can flourish and put forth its possibilities of growth and perfection. From dynamic it becomes static and from the static position it proceeds to stagnation and degeneration. Even the higher being of man, which

finds its account in a vigorous life dynamism, both as a fund of force to be transmuted into its own higher energies and as a connection with the outer life, suffers in the end by this failure and contraction. The ancient Indian ideal recognised this truth and divided life into four essential and indispenable divisions, *artha*, *kâma*, *dharma*, *moksha*, vital interests, satisfaction of desires of all kinds, ethics and religion, and liberation or spirituality, and it insisted on the practice and development of all. Still it tended not only to put the last forward as the goal of all the rest, which it is, but to put it at the end of life and its habitat in another world of our being, rather than here in life itself. But this rules out the idea of the kingdom of God on earth and the perfectibility of society and of man in society, without which no universal ideal can be complete. It provides a temporary and occasional, but not an inherent justification for human life and the collective being of the race.

Let us then look at this vital instinct and life dynamism in its own being and not merely as an occasion for ethical or religious development and see whether it is really rebellious in its very nature to the Divine. We can see at once that what we have described is the first stage of the vital being, the infra-rational, the instinctive, when it is developing itself and being trained by the growing application to it of the enlightening reason. It is full of often hideous uglinesses and brute blunders and jarring discords, but so also is the infra-rational stage in ethics, in aesthetics, in religion even. It is true too that it presents a much more enormous difficulty than these others, more resists elevation, because it is almost the very province of the infra-rational, nearest to it at any rate in the scale of being. But still it has too, properly looked at, its rich elements of power, beauty, nobility, good, sacrifice, worship, divinity; here too are high-reaching gods, masked but still resplendent. Until recently, and even now, rea-

son, in the garb no longer of philosophy, but of science, has increasingly proposed to take up all this physical and vital life and perfect it by the sole power of rationalism, by a knowledge of the laws of Nature, of sociology and physiology and biology and health, by collectivism, by State education, by a new psychological education and a number of other kindred means. All this is well, but it is not enough, if our theory of life is right and if this great mass of vital energism contains in itself the imprisoned supra-rational, if it has, as it then must have, the instinctive reaching out for something divine, absolute and infinite which is concealed in its blind strivings. Here too reason must be over-passed or surpass itself and become a passage to the Divine.

The first mark of the supra-rational, when it intervenes to take up any portion of our being, is the growth of absolute ideals ; and since life is Being and Force and the divine state of being is unity and the Divine in force is God as Power taking possession, the absolute vital ideals must be of that nature. Nowhere are they wanting. If we take the domestic and social life of man, we find them there in several forms ; but we need only note that of love, the absolute conjugal, maternal and paternal, filial and fraternal love, love of friends, love of comrades ; these things of which the poets have sung so persistently, are no mere glamour and illusion, however the egoisms and discords of our instinctive, infra-rational way of living may seem to contradict them, but divine possibilities and the means of our growth into unity of being. Certain religious disciplines have understood this and, taking them up boldly, applied them to our relations with God ; and by a converse process they can become for us beautiful and wonderful relations of God in man fulfilling himself in human life. And all the economic development of life itself, what is it but an attempt to get rid of the animal squalor and bareness which is

what obligatory poverty really means, and to give to man the divine ease and leisure of the gods ? It is pursued in a wrong way, no doubt, and with many ugly circumstances, but still the ideal is there. Politics itself, that apparent game of strife and deceit and charlatanism, is a large field of absolute idealisms. What of patriotism,—never mind the often ugly instincts from which it starts and which it still obstinately preserves,—but in its aspects of worship, self-giving, discipline, self-sacrifice ? The great political ideals of man, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, apart from the selfishnesses they serve and the rational and practical justifications with which they arm themselves, have had for their soul an ideal, some half-seen truth of the absolute, and have carried with them a worship, a loyalty, a loss of self in the idea which have made men ready to suffer and die for them. War and strife themselves have been schools of heroism ; they have created the *kshatriyās tyaktajīvitān* of the Sanscrit epic phrase, the men of power who have abandoned their bodily life for a cause ; and without heroism man cannot grow into the Godhead. Courage, energy and strength are among the very first principles of the divine nature in action. And all this great vital, political, economical life of man with its two powers of competition and cooperation is sweeping forward towards the realisation of power and unity,—in two divine directions, therefore. For God in life is Power possessed of self-mastery, but also of mastery of His world, and man moves towards conquest of his world, his environment ; and in his fulfilment He is oneness, and the ideal of human unity is coming slowly into sight. The competitive nation-units are feeling, however feebly as yet, the call to cast themselves into a great unified cooperative life of humanity.

No doubt all is being worked out still very crudely by the confused clash of life-forces and ideas and the means proposed are too mechanical, they miss the truth

that the outer unity can only endure if it is founded on the inner oneness. But so life has moved always and must at first move. The instinct of ego-expansion is the means by which men have come into contact with each other and the struggle for possession is the first crude means towards union ; the aggressive assertion of the smaller self is the first step towards the growth into the larger self. Into that the struggle of nations, ideas, civilisations, cultures, ideals, religions must eventually ascend. And when the suprarational ideal makes itself clear, the inner oneness will grow more swiftly and surely. Men will see more clearly that the growth of the ethical, the aesthetic, the ideative being of individuals and human groups towards unity—not meaning by that uniformity—can alone bring about the entire union of their life, and that this can only be done really and surely by the growth of a united spiritual life. Already some of the advocates of a mechanical social unity and perfection are awaking to the fact that in the God in man is the only clue to real union and the only power that can bring it about. And the God in man is not his reason, but the Divine in him of which reason and the rest, the vital being not excluded, are powers, means of growth and instruments of self-fulfilment. The Highest being seen, the Self on each grade of its being has the right to say "I am He."

Hymns of the Atris

THE SECOND HYMN. TO THE DAWN

[The Rishi hymns the divine Dawn, daughter of Heaven, as the bringer of the Truth, the bliss, the heavens of light, creator of the Light, giver of vision, maker, follower, leader of the paths of Truth, remover of the darkness, the eternal and ever youthful goddess of our godward journeying.]

1 Dawn of the luminous journey, Dawn queen of truth, large with the Truth. how wide is the gleam from her rosy limbs,—Dawn divine who brings with her the heaven of light! Her the seers adore with their thoughts.

2 This is she who has the vision and she awakens man and makes his paths easy to travel and walks in his front. How large is her chariot, how vast and all-pervading the goddess, how she brings Light in the front of the days!

3 This is she who yokes her cows of rosy light; her journey does not fail and such is the treasure she makes that it passes not away. She hews out our paths to happiness; divine is she, far-shining her glory, many the hymns that rise to her, she brings with her every boon.

4 Behold her in her biune energy of earth and heaven, how she comes into being in her whiteness and discloses her body in our front. She follows perfectly the paths of Truth, as one who is wise and knows, and she hedges not in our regions

5 Lo, how brilliant is her body when she is found and known! how she stands on high as if bathing in light that we may have vision! Driving away all enemies and all darknesses Dawn, the daughter of Heaven, has come with the Light.

6 Lo, the daughter of Heaven like a woman full of happiness moves to meet the gods and her form travels ever nearer to them. Unveiling all blessings for the giver of sacrifice the goddess young for ever has created the Light once more even as in the beginning.

The Ideal of Human Unity

CHAPTER XXVII

Such then is the extreme possible form of a world-State, the form dreamed of by the socialistic, scientific, humanitarian thinkers who represent the modern mind at its highest point of self-consciousness and are therefore able to detect the trend of its tendencies, though to the half-rationalised mind of the ordinary man whose view does not go beyond the day and its immediate morrow, their speculations seem to be chimerical and utopian. In reality, they are nothing of the kind; in their essence, not necessarily in their form, they are, as we have seen, not only the logical outcome, but the inevitable practical upshot of the incipient urge towards human unity, if it is pursued by a principle of mechanical unification,—that is to say, by the principle of the State. It is for this reason that we have found it necessary to show the practical principles and necessities which have underlain the growth of the unified and finally socialistic nation-State, in order to see how the same movement in international unification must lead to the same results by an analogous necessity of development. The State principle leads necessarily to uniformity, regulation, mechanisation; its inevitable end is socialism. There is nothing fortuitous, no room for chance in political and social development, and the emergence of socialism was no accident or thing that

might not have been, but the inevitable result contained in the very seed of the State idea, inevitable from the moment it began to be hammered out. The work of the Alfreds and Charlemagnes contained this as their sure result,—men working almost always without knowing for what they have worked. But in modern times the signs are so clear that we need not be deceived or imagine, when we begin to lay a mechanical base for world-unification, that the result contained in the very effort will not insist on developing itself, however far-off it may seem from immediate possibilities. A strict unification, a vast uniformity, a regulated socialisation of united mankind will be the predestined fruit of our labour.

The result can only be avoided if an opposite force interposes and puts in its veto, as happened in Asia where the State idea could never go beyond a certain point because the fundamental principle of the national life was opposed to its full development. The races of Asia, even the most organised, have always been peoples rather than nations in the modern sense, or nations only in the sense of having a common soul-life, a common culture, a common social organisation, a common political head, but not nation-States. The State machine existed only for a restricted and superficial action ; the real life of the people was determined by other powers with which it could not meddle ; indeed its principal function was to maintain sufficient political and administrative order—as far as possible an immutable order—for the real life of the people to function undisturbed in its own way, according to its own innate tendencies. Some such unity for the human race is possible in the place of an organised world-State, if the nations of mankind succeed in preserving their developed instinct of democratic nationalism intact and strong enough to resist the domination of the State idea ; the result would then be not a single nation of mankind and a world-State, but a single human people

with a free association of its nation-units or, it may be, some other new kind of group-units, assured by some sufficient machinery of international order in the peaceful and natural functioning of their social, economical and cultural relations.

Which then would be preferable? and to answer that question we have to ask ourselves, what would be the account of gain and loss for the life of the human race resulting from the creation of a unified world-State. In all probability the results would be, with all allowance for the great difference between then and now, very much the same in essence as those which we observe in the ancient Roman Empire. On the credit side we should have first one enormous gain, the assured peace of the world. It might not be absolutely assured against internal shocks and disturbances but, supposing certain outstanding questions to be settled with some approach to permanence, it could eliminate even such occasional violences of civil strife as disturbed the old Roman imperial economy and whatever perturbations there might be, need not disturb the settled fabric of civilisation so as to cast all again into the throes of a great radical and violent change. Peace assured, there would be an unparalleled development of ease and well-being; a great number of outstanding problems would be solved by the united intelligence of mankind working no longer in fragments, but as one; the vital life of the race would settle down into an assured rational order comfortable, well-regulated, well-informed, with a satisfactory machinery for meeting all difficulties, exigencies and problems with the least possible friction, disturbance, mere uncertainty of adventure and peril. At first there would be a great cultural and intellectual efflorescence; Science would organise itself for the betterment of human life and the increase of knowledge and mechanical efficiency; the various cultures of the world,—those that still exist as separate rea-

lities,—would not only exchange ideas more intimately, but throw their gains into the common fund ; new motives and forms would arise for a time in art and poetry ; men would meet each other much more closely and completely than before, develop a greater mutual understanding rid of many accidental motives of strife, hatred and repugnance which now exist, and arrive, if not at brotherhood,—which cannot come by mere political, social and cultural union,—yet at some imitation of it, a sufficiently kindly association and interchange. There would be an unprecedented splendour, ease and amenity in this development of human life, and no doubt some chief poet of the age, writing in the common or official tongue,—shall we say, Esperanto ?—would sing confidently of the approach of the golden age or even proclaim its actual arrival and eternal duration. But after a time there would be a dying down of force, a static condition of the human mind and human life, then stagnation, decay, disintegration. The soul of man would begin to wither in the midst of his acquisitions.

This would come about, principally, for the same reasons as in the Roman example, because the chief conditions of a vigorous life would be lost, liberty, free variation and the shock upon each other of freely developing differentiated lives. It may be said that this will not happen, because the world-State will be a free democratic State, not a liberty-stifling empire or autocracy, and because liberty and progress are the very principle of modern life and no development would be tolerated which went contrary to that principle. But in all this there is not really the security that seems to be offered ; what is now, need not endure under quite different circumstances and the idea that it will is a mirage thrown from the actualities of the present on the possibly quite different actualities of the future. Democracy is by no means a sure preservative of liberty ; on the contrary, we see to-day the demo-

cratic system of government march steadily towards such an organised annihilation of individual liberty as could not have been dreamed of in the old aristocratic and monarchical systems. From the more violent and brutal forms of despotic oppression which were associated with those systems, democracy has indeed delivered those nations which have been fortunate enough to achieve liberal forms of government, and that is a great gain. It revives now only in periods of excitement, often in the form of mob tyranny. But there is a deprivation of liberty which is more respectable in appearance, more subtle and systematised, more mild in its method because it has a greater force at its back, but for that very reason capable of becoming more effective and pervading. The tyranny of the majority has become a familiar phrase and its deadening effects have been depicted with a great force of resentment by certain of the modern intellectuals, * but what the future promises us is something more formidable still, the tyranny of the whole, of the self-hypnotised mass over its constituent groups and units.

This is a very remarkable development, the more so as originally individual freedom was the ideal with which democracy set out both in ancient and modern times. The Greeks associated democracy with two main ideas, first, an effective and personal share by each citizen in the actual government, legislation, administration of the community, secondly, a great freedom of individual temperament and action. But neither of these characteristics can flourish in the modern type of democracy, although the United States of America have tended to a certain extent in this direction. In large States the personal share of each citizen in the government cannot be realised; he can only have an equal share in the periodical choice of his legislators and administrators. Even if these have not

* Eg. Ibsen in his drama, "An Enemy of the People."

practically to be chosen from a class which is not the whole or even the majority of the community, at present the middle class, still these legislators and administrators do not really represent their electors,—they represent another formless, bodiless entity which has taken the place of monarch and aristocracy, that impersonal group-being which assumes some sort of outward form and body and conscious action in the huge mechanism of the modern State. Against this power the individual is much more helpless than he was against old oppressions, and when he feels its pressure grinding him into its uniform moulds, he has no resource except either an impotent anarchism or else a retreat, still to some extent possible, into the freedom of his soul or the freedom of his intellectual being.

For this is one gain of modern democracy, which ancient liberty did not realise to the same extent and which has not yet been renounced, a full freedom of speech and thought. So long as this lasts, the fear of a static condition of humanity and subsequent stagnation might seem to be groundless, especially when it is accompanied by universal education which provides the largest possible human field for producing an effectuating force. Freedom of thought and speech—the two necessarily go together, since there can be no real freedom of thought where a padlock is put upon freedom of speech,—is not indeed complete without freedom of association ; for free speech means free propagandism and propagandism only becomes effective by association for the realisation of its objects : but that liberty also exists with more or less of qualifications or safeguards in all democratic States. But it is a question whether this liberty has been won for the race with an entire security,—apart from its occasional suspensions in free and its restriction in subject countries,—and whether the future has not certain surprises in this direction. It will be the last freedom directly attacked by the all-regulating State, which will first seek to regu-

late the whole life of the individual in the type approved by the community ; when it sees how all-important is the thought in shaping the life, it will be led to take hold of that too by forming the thought of the individual through a State education, by training him to the acceptance of the approved communal, ethical, social, cultural, religious ideas, as was done in many ancient forms of education ; only if it finds this weapon ineffective, is it likely to limit freedom of thought directly on the plea of danger to the State and to civilisation. Already we see the right of the State to interfere with individual thought announced here and there in a most ominous manner. One would have imagined religious liberty at least was assured to mankind ; yet recently we have seen an exponent of "new thought" advancing positively the doctrine that the State is under no obligation to recognise the religious liberty of the individual and that even if it grants freedom of religious thought,—as a matter of expediency, not of right,—it is not called upon to allow freedom of cult ! And indeed this seems logical ; for if the State has the right to regulate the whole life of the individual, it must surely have the right to regulate his religion, which is so important a part of his life, and his thought, which has so powerful an effect upon life.

Supposing an all-regulating socialistic world-State to be established, freedom of thought under such a regime would necessarily mean a criticism not only of the details, but of the very principles of the existing state of things. This criticism could only take one direction, the direction of anarchism, whether of the spiritual Tolstoian kind or else the intellectual anarchism which is now the creed of a small minority but still a growing force in many European countries. It would declare the free development of the individual as its gospel ; it would denounce government as an evil and no longer at all a necessary evil ; it would affirm the full and free religious, ethical, intellec-

tual, temperamental growth of the individual from within as the true ideal of human life and all else as things not worth having at the price of the renunciation of this ideal, a renunciation which it would describe as the loss of his soul. It would preach as the ideal of society a free association or brotherhood of individuals without government or compulsion.

What would the world-State do with this kind of free thought ? It might tolerate it so long as it did not translate itself into individual and associated action, but the moment it spread or practically asserted itself, the whole principle of its own being would be attacked and its very base would be sapped and undermined. To stop the destruction at its root or else consent to its own subversion would be the only alternatives before it. But even before any such necessity arises, it is not impossible that the principle of regulation of all things by the State would have extended itself to the regulation of the mental as well as the physical life of man by the communal mind which was the ideal of former civilisations. A static order of society would be the necessary consequence, since without the freedom of the individual a society cannot remain progressive ; it must settle into the rut or the groove of a regulated perfection—or of something to which it gives that name because of the rationality of system and symmetrical idea of order which it embodies. The communal mass is always conservative and static in its consciousness and only moves slowly in the tardy process of subconscious Nature, it is the free individual who is the conscious progressive : when he is able to impart that progressive consciousness to the mass, then only can we have a progressive society.

About Astrology *

The subject of this book is one which stands nowadays put away under a sort of intellectual ban placed on it some centuries ago by the scientific and rationalistic European mind and not yet lifted. Mr. N. P. Subramania Iyer has undertaken an astrological series which will deal with the various parts of astrology, and the present volume contains the text and translation of the *Kalaprakāṣika*, a treatise on the selection of the right times by astrological rule for undertaking any and every action of human life. The book is well printed and got up, the translation admirably done in a style free enough to avoid all awkwardness,—the author has a thorough control of the English tongue and an excellent style of his own,—but perfectly faithful to the matter of the text. But the most interesting part of the work for the ordinary reader is the introduction, in which he gives amidst other matter the psychological explanation of the influence of the planets and states for what they stand in relation to the Indian Vedantic philosophy of existence. I have not seen elsewhere any exposition of the subject equally original and illuminative.

Astrology is in the general mind associated with that class of subjects which goes under the name of the occult, and along with others of its class it has long been discredited by modern "enlightenment", one does not quite know on what grounds or with what rational justification. It has its psychic and mystical side, but that is not its ordinary presentation ; there it claims to be a science like any other with fixed processes and an exact and definite system of rules which ought to be perfectly capable of verification or of disproof by experiment and induction like any other science. Its basis is astronomical and mathematical, its data perfectly open and positive and in no way hidden or occult, nor does it at all shrink back from the test or hide itself in secrecy and mystery. It does not indeed give ordinarily the why, but only the how of the causes and effects it professes to establish, but so it is with all other sciences ; they do not give the reason of things, but only their processes. Yet astrology is supposed at some indefinite time in the march of human mind to have been exploded,—along with such things as witch-

* *Kalaprakāṣika* ; the Standard Book on the Election System :
by N. P. Subramania Iyer, Tanjore.

craft and demonology, not to speak of the existence of spirits and the immortality of the soul,—and there is a sort of idea that it has been disproved and therefore put aside as a superstition which no reasonable man can even look at except with a lofty disdain, much less stoop to investigate with an open mind its truth or falsity. Still the anathema of Science has not been able to destroy it ; in Europe it has revived, even though its practice as a profession is punishable by the law, and in India it has always survived. It is not indeed the habit of educated Indians to profess explicitly their belief in it, they fight shy of that as a rule, but it is largely consulted by numbers of them, as also by many Europeans. This is an anomalous position which ought to be corrected. Either astrology is a true science and should be investigated, proved, improved where defective and generally rehabilitated in opinion, or else it is a pseudo-science and should be investigated and disproved so as to cut the ground away finally from all secret belief or open credulity.

As a matter of fact astrology has never been scientifically disproved, nor has any rational ground ever been advanced for treating it as a pseudo-science. It simply came to be assumed at a certain period and under certain intellectual influences that it was a childish superstition. Or if there were any grounds, then it was left aside because astrologers were charlatans, because many, perhaps most predictions went wrong, but most of all because it was thought that in the nature of things, in any rational theory of the universe the planets simply could not have any influence on our characters, lives and actions. None of these grounds are sufficient. If many astrologers are charlatans, so also have there been many quacks in the field of medicine ; at one time indeed not only did they pullulate, but the system of medicine itself seemed so defective that there were plenty of clear and enlightened minds who were inclined with Moliere to denounce the whole thing as a gross pseudo-science, an elaborate and solemn system of ignorance, humbug and quackery. Supposing that view had prevailed,—it could not, merely because men are too vitally interested in healing their ailments and preserving their bodies and know no other way of doing it,—that would not have done away with the truth underlying the science.

That many predictions go wrong, proves no more essentially against astrology than the constant failure of doctors to heal diseases proves against their science. The first reason of this failure may be that a great number of practising astrologers are either charlatans who seek to please their clients rather than predict by scientific rule,—of that kind there are perhaps many,—or else inefficient and ignorant men who practise only by rule of thumb, perfunctorily and with a main eye upon their fees. But if even capable astrologers fail, that also only proves that either the science or their way of treating it is largely empirical or that some of its rules and theories may be errors. But every science has to pass through its empirical stage and some—as, again, the science of medicine,—have hardly emerged from it, and every science too burdens itself in its progress with false generalisations, incorrect theories and imperfect rules which have afterwards to be discarded or amended. As the main point in medicine is whether herbs and metals have or have not certain effects on the body and whether their workings can be substantiated by experience in a sufficient number of cases to establish a regular relation of cause and effect, so it is in astrology with the fundamental question of planetary influences upon earth and its creatures.

The *a priori* argument from the rational theory of the universe cannot stand. There is nothing essentially irrational in the idea that in this solar system, so closely linked together, there may be mutual influences of all the planets upon each other or that the beings of a particular planet are powerfully influenced or even dominated by influences from the others. The question remains, the *a priori* rationality being admitted or at least not summarily dismissed, first, whether it is so in fact and, secondly, how far those influences go and of what nature they are. Astrology affirms that they not only affect our bodies, but also our psychical being. If matter and mind were entirely independent entities having no influence or determining effect upon each other, then such a result could not be; but that is not the case. According to the materialistic view of the universe which claims to be the sole rationalistic view, mind is itself an effect of matter and all its states and movements are determined by matter. There is nothing then impossible, planetary influence

being once admitted, in the action of material bodies producing psychical conditions on the earth and thereby determining our psychical states and movements. In a more truly rationalistic view mind and matter are always influencing and determining each other ; here too, given a universal mind and matter so acting upon individual matter and mind, the movements of the planetary system may be one or even the first nodus of their activities, and the assertions of astrology become at least primarily credible.

Farther, astrology affirms that these influences determine the whole course of our lives and that the all-important element is time. That raises the whole question of the influence of Time upon human beings and events ; does Time determine the course of our lives and the states of our being and, if so, how far and in what way ? Or to put the question more precisely, as it is raised by astrology, do or can the conditions reigning at a given critical time, in this case the moment of birth, determine our physical and psychological conditions and the whole course of our future lives, or determine them to any considerable extent ? and are the relative movements and therefore the mutual positions of the sun and planets with the earth and each other either the nodus or in some way the effective signs of these determinations ? And, secondly, do the developing time conditions which come afterwards, by themselves or viewed in reference to the original conditions, determine from moment to moment, from time to time the subsequent evolution of our primary physical and psychological conditions and the course of linked and successive circumstances which make up the history of our lives ? and if so, again, are the relative movements and mutual positions of the sun and planets at any given time the nodus or the effective signs of this later determination also ? can they therefore be taken for all practical purposes as determinants, or at any rate as sure signs by which the determinations of our life and being can be discovered ? That is the question which astrology raises, and it is evidently a perfectly legitimate and rational question ; nor can we on *a priori* grounds condemn and put away an affirmative answer, which is based upon past experience systematised into rules and theories, as a superstition or a childish folly. Granted that all things here are a chain of cause and effect and that if and so far as we know that chain, scientific pre-

diction becomes in that proportion possible,—two propositions which no one, surely, will have the temerity to dispute,—there is no inherent improbability in the clue to happenings human and other on the planets being found in the motions of those planets. Astronomy is in a sense the primary physical science, for the first facts which give all the others their field are astronomical facts; it may well be that in the psycho-physical field the same rule holds and that there the first facts may be astrological.

The *a priori* objections disappearing, the next step is to ask ourselves whether there is a sufficient *prima facie* empirical case for inquiring into the actual truth of astrology. This at present depends upon the experience of isolated individuals, a very unsatisfactory basis. But if this experience could be collected, sifted and published, I believe it would be found that a formidable *prima facie* case exists in favour of astrology, much stronger than that which encouraged the Society for psychical research to carry on its work in another psycho-physical field to such important conclusions. I may state my own experience in the matter in the belief, justified by many instances, that it is only typical of the experience of hundreds of others. My first accidental contact with an Indian astrologer was not encouraging. This gentleman was the most accomplished thought-reader I have ever seen; for he asked me to think my question without speaking it and not only successfully named the unspoken question I had fixed on, but three others which had crossed my mind, one of them only in the merest flash and without leaving any impression behind: this he pretended to do by mathematical calculation, an operation which I took leave to regard as humbug. For when it came to his answers, I found that he was still doing thought-reading and not astrology; he simply echoed the hopes or thoughts in my mind and his predictions did not come within one hundred miles of the truth. Other practitioners I have found to belong, a few plainly to the class of mere flattering charlatans, but most to the inefficient who read by rule of thumb and have made no profound study of their science. On the other hand with capable astrologers the results have been often of such a remarkable accuracy as to put quite aside any possibility of chance hit, mere coincidence, intelligent prevision or any of the current explanations. I may ins-

tance the father of a friend of mine, a deep student of the science but not a professional, who predicted accurately the exact year, month, day, hour and even minute of his own death. In my own case accuracy was hampered by the inability to fix the precise moment of my birth ; still some of the results were extraordinary. Two may be mentioned, from one and the same astrologer, which related to my public career. One, given when I had not yet plunged into the political vortex and my then obscure personality was quite unknown to the astrologer, predicted as an inevitable certitude of my career a political struggle with powerful non-Indian adversaries during which for a time even my life would fall under the shadow of danger. The other, given at the time of my first prosecution in the *Bande Mataram* case, predicted three successive criminal trials in each of which the prosecution would fail. And these are only two instances out of a number. Supposing all well-authenticated evidence of the kind to be collected, I am convinced there would be an overwhelmingly strong *prima facie* case and even a body of sufficiently strong empirical proof to establish at least a nucleus of truth in astrology.

That would be the first step. For if astrology is a science and is to take its proper place, the first necessity is to dissipate by an appeal to the empirical mind of the general public as well as of the sceptical thinker the great mass of unenquiring prejudice which now exists against it. To publish the text and translation of the best authorities, as Mr. Iyer is now doing, with illuminating introductions is a preliminary need in this case so that we may know what we have to go upon. The second is to mass evidence of the empirical truth of the science, giving in each case the prediction in all its details, the more detailed the better, the astrological rules on which it was based and the event, each detail of the event being compared with the corresponding detail of the prediction. Only then would there be a clear field for the consideration of the scientific and philosophical doubts, questions and problems which would still arise ; but this, though the most important aspect of the matter, I must leave for future handling.

A. G.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE ASCENT OUT OF THE IGNORANCE

A heightening then of our force of consciousness, now only mental, until it not only admits a new, a supramental or spiritual principle, but rises into that and lives in it, is the whole meaning of what we have called the divine life, or rather of the growth out of the ordinary, the half-animal humanity into the divine being and the divine life. This heightening of the force of consciousness in our whole manifest being so that we may raise it into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from the mind into the spirit, is not only the whole aim and process of religion, of all higher askesis, of Yoga, but it is also the very aim of our life itself, the secret purpose found in the sum of its labour. The principle of life in us seeks to confirm and perfect itself on the planes of mind, vitality and body which it already possesses, but also to go beyond and transform these into means for the conscious spirit to unfold itself. Otherwise, if it were merely some part of ourselves—intellect, heart, will or another—which, dissatisfied with the present existence, were striving to get away from it to a greater height of living and leave the rest of the being to take care of itself or to perish, the philosophy of a world-fleeing asceticism would be entirely justified. But this is not the real trend of our existence, which is a labour of Nature in us to as-

cend with all itself into a higher principle of being than it has yet attained, not to destroy itself in order that that higher principle may be exclusively affirmed. To heighten the force of consciousness into the spiritual principle is the indispensable means, but it is not the object and the sole thing to be done.

The object is to live on that new height in all our being, and therefore the heightening must not be so done as to drop away our whole natural being into the indeterminate stuff of Nature and attain to the inactive principle of Spirit ; it must be so done that the whole of our being rises into the spiritual nature. An integral transformation is the integral aim of the Spirit in its universal urge of self-transcendence. It is for this reason that the self-transcending process of Nature is not confined to a heightening of herself into a new principle ; as we have seen, it includes a widening so as to establish a larger field of life in which the greater power of this new and higher principle may have play. This action is not confined to an utmost possible wideness in the essential play of the new principle itself ; it consists also in the taking up of that which is lower into the higher values, so that the divine or spiritual life will not only take up the mental, vital, physical life into itself transformed and spiritualised, but give them a much wider play than was possible to them so long as they were living on their own level. The mental, physical, vital life will not be destroyed, lessened, impaired by being spiritualised, but will become much richer, greater, more powerful and more perfect than in their unspiritualised condition.

But what we have now to note is that this process of growth, of heightening, widening and integralisation, is in its nature that growth out of a sevenfold ignorance into the sevenfold knowledge which at the start of this portion of our enquiry we insisted upon as the real character of the spiritual evolution. The crux of that ignorance is the

constitutional,* the ignorance of the true character of our becoming. It consists in a limitation by the plane we inhabit and by the predominant principle of our nature. The plane we inhabit is the plane of matter, the predominant principle in our nature is the intelligent mind with the sense-mind as its support and pedestal. Therefore the preoccupation of the intelligent mind with the material existence as shown to it through the sense-mind is the stamp of the constitutional ignorance peculiar to the human being ; the attempt to grow out of it is the whole key to a real progress of our humanity. For our ignorance, as we have said, is not complete ; it is a limitation of consciousness, not the nescience which is the stamp of the same ignorance in purely material existences, those which have not only matter for their plane but matter for their dominant principle. It is a partial, a limiting, a dividing and therefore a falsifying knowledge. Out of that falsifying limitation we have to grow.

Certainly, the first step that man has to take is to know this physical existence as well as he can by applying the intelligent mind to such knowledge of it as his sense-mind can give to him ; but this is only a preliminary step and, if we stop there, we have made no real progress : we are where we were and have only gained more physical elbow-room to move about and more power to our elbow to push things about and jostle and hustle around amid the throng of physical forces and existences. The utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it embrace the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers of earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material ether and electricity, is no essential gain. That is why the gospel of materialism in spite of its dazzling physical triumphs proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical science with

* See Chapter XXXII. Vol. III. page 451.

all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness for the human race. Our true happiness lies in our true growth, in a complete victory throughout the range of our being, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature ; and our true victory comes not by describing wider circles on the plane where we began, but by transcendence, by ascent. We have first to heighten our force of consciousness so as to get a fuller hold of the mental existence which is much more than the physical our true home, precisely because we are dominantly mind and not matter, mental much rather than physical beings.

But even this is not enough. We get indeed a much subtler higher and wider existence, consciousness, force, happiness in proportion as we rise in the scale of mind ; not only so but we are able to embrace more of the vital and physical existence itself, to know it better, to use it better, to give it nobler values, a broader range, a more sublimated action : in other words, by thus heightening our mental consciousness we get also a great widening of our being and field and are able to take up powerfully the vital and physical life also on a much larger scale and to much higher issues. For, we must repeat,—it cannot be too often repeated,—we cannot really know entirely or use aright even the material existence by physical science and knowledge alone, by the mastery of physical and mechanical processes alone : to know it, to use rightly it we must go beyond it ; we must know what is within it and behind it. But still we are not merely embodied minds ; there is a spiritual being, a spiritual principle, a spiritual plane of nature. We have to heighten our force of consciousness into that, to widen by that still more largely, universally, infinitely our range of being and our field, to take up by that our lower life and use it for greater ends and in a larger plan, spiritually : we have to integralise our being

in the being and consciousness, by the force and for the joy of the spirit. Then only we change the constitutional ignorance into the true and effective knowledge of our being and becoming. For really we are spirit, at present using mind predominantly, life and body subordinately, with matter for our original field, but not our only field. This, however, is only at present ; for there are in us, dormant or imperfectly active, other principles beyond mind and proper to the spiritual nature which we can use, and there are higher fields of action than the physical, vital and mental existence. Therefore we have not to be satisfied by a vague or an ecstatic ascent into spirit or by a formless exaltation through the touch of its infinities ; we have to possess its planes and its instruments, the supermind and those yet higher essential principles of pure bliss, pure force, pure consciousness, pure being, and raise by them our normal human nature into the divine. Then we shall possess in effective knowledge the true constitution of our being and we shall have conquered the ignorance.

The conquest of our constitutional ignorance cannot be complete, cannot be done at all to the extent or in the way we have indicated, unless we conquer at the same time our psychological ignorance ; for the two are bound up with each other. Our psychological ignorance consists in a limitation of our self-knowledge to that little wave or superficial stream of our being which is our conscient waking self carried on by active memory from moment to moment of time. Behind is that vast triple action of our secret being without which our superficial consciousness and activity could not exist or act. In material things only the activity is manifest, superficial ; the whole consciousness is secret, subliminal, unmanifest to themselves ; in us the consciousness is partly manifest, partly awake. But we can enlarge it far beyond its present capacities by bringing into play ranges of our being which are at present subconscient, circumconscient and superconscient

and by entering into them through various means and bringing back with us to the surface their secrets.

The subconscious contains that part of our constitution of being which is purely physical, purely vital and also the lowest ranges of the sense-mind which in our evolution we have overpassed. Of these we bring only so much to the surface as our waking sense-mind and intelligence need for their operations and in bringing them up we do not do it in their own values, but by a translation into the values of our waking human sense and intelligence. It is only by an experience abnormal to us at present that we can become aware of our real bodily being and vitality, aware too of the mechanical, subhuman physical and vital mind which informs it, a consciousness in the body and its cells which is not ours, but which is there all the same and is therefore a part of our being. But this we can do not by descending into the subconscious, which would only plunge us into a comatose stupor, but by ascending into the superconscious and from there looking down into, embracing and becoming aware of the secrets of our physical being.

The circumconscious is that large action of the intelligence and sense-mind embracing our waking consciousness which is not brought to the front, which is subliminal, in the modern phrase, and of which our waking sense and intelligence is only a selection for the utility of our present mental and physical life on earth. This too we can only become aware of by rising to a higher plane of mind than that which our waking consciousness inhabits. For in this superconscious are included both the higher planes of our mental being and also all the planes of our supramental and pure spiritual being. Into that we have to heighten our force of consciousness, so that we may dwell on the superior planes of mind into which the supermind and the spirit can throw themselves and can make themselves initially manifest and govern from them

our lower being ; afterwards, when our humanity is ready for the yet sublimer ascent, we may get beyond the mental into the supramental itself and the pure spiritual. It is quite possible indeed, without actually ascending into the superconscient mental planes or, at least, without actually living on them, to get rid to a certain extent of our constitutional ignorance, to become aware of ourselves as spiritual beings and to spiritualise, though very imperfectly, our normal human life. This is done by opening ourselves to these higher planes and receiving their enlightening messages and transforming influence : that is always possible to any and every human being. But this is only a preliminary stage. To get to the unity with the divine being, consciousness, power, bliss we must ascend beyond the planes of mind which we now inhabit. Here too it is not only a heightening that is needed : that might lead to possession of the higher levels only in the state of ecstatic trance. We have to bring this possession into our waking life, and this implies a widening into immense ranges of being and new activities which are impossible to our present narrow and limited consciousness. It implies also the taking up of our present conscious being and activities and the giving them a new, an infinite, a divine value which transfigures our whole human existence. The complete method of Nature in self-transcendence implies always this triple movement.

With this movement must necessarily be associated a rejection of our present narrowing temporal ignorance. Not only do we live from moment to moment of time, but our whole view is limited to our life in the present body between this birth and death. As it does not go farther back in the past, so it does not extend farther out into the future ; we are limited by the physical memory of the present life. This limitation of our temporal consciousness is intimately dependent upon the preoccupation of our mentality with the material plane and life in which

it is at present acting, and so long as the material pre-occupation persists, the growth into the divine life is impossible. We have to realise our persistent existence in time as well as our eternal existence beyond it ; until we do this, we cannot get our self-knowledge into the right focus and our whole consciousness and action will be vitiated by a great practical error which prevents us from seeing the true nature, purpose and conditions of our being. This is why the belief in immortality is made so vital a point in most religions. But a belief is not sufficient; in order that we may possess the true self-knowledge of our being in time, we must live in the consciousness of our immortality, that is to say, both of our perpetual and of our timeless being.

For immortality does not mean merely some kind of personal survival of the bodily death, but the eternal being of our self-existence without beginning or end, beyond the whole succession of physical births and deaths through which we pass and beyond also the alternations of our existence in this and other worlds; and secondly, the perpetual continuity of our temporal existence and experience from life to life, from world to world. The first is the knowledge of self in the Non-birth, to use the language of the Upanishad ; the second is the knowledge of self in the birth ; and it is the simultaneous possession of both in their right relation to each other that gives us the integral enjoyment of our divine and immortal being. By the first we become free from the chain of birth and death, that great object of so many Indian disciplines ; by the second we are able to possess freely, with right knowledge, without ignorance, without bondage by the chain of our actions the experience of the spirit in its successions of time. To exist consciously in eternity and not in the bondage to the hour and the succession of the moments is the first condition of the divine consciousness and the divine life ; to possess and govern

from that eternal being the course and process of the becoming is the practical outcome of a spiritual self-possession and self-mastery. This is brought about naturally by a transcendence of our material preoccupation and a constant living on the higher planes of the mind and the spirit. The heightening of our consciousness into its spiritual principle is attended by its heightening out of the transient life from moment to moment into the eternal life of our immortal consciousness, and with it comes a widening of our range and field in time and a taking up and higher use of our present existence. Knowing ourselves as eternal spirit which uses all the worlds and all lives for various self-experience, possesses an eternal life which perpetually develops its activities through successive physical existences, and figures itself in a soul and mental being which determine their own perpetual life-development, we are able to live not as slaves of a blind *karmic* impulsion, but as masters of our being and becoming.

Equally, we get rid of the egoistic ignorance ; for so long as we are at all bound by that, the divine life must either be unattainable or imperfect. The ego is, we have seen, a falsification of our true individuality, a limiting self-identification of it with this body, this life, this mind ; it is a separation from other souls by which we are shut up in our own individual experience and cannot live in our universal being ; and it is a separation from God, our highest self and our one self in all. The heightening of our consciousness into the spirit is also a heightening by which we arise out of the bodily, vital, mental ego into the highest self and therefore into the being of God. It must be attended by a widening through which we break out of the imprisonment in our separate individual being and, becoming universal, identify ourselves in consciousness with the spiritual being, life, mind, physical existence of all. At the same time it is not a destroy-

ing of our individual existence, but a taking up and transforming of it into a conscious term of the universal being and a figure of the transcendent Divine.

In the same movement by ascending into the spirit we have got rid of the cosmic ignorance, for we know ourselves in our timeless immutable self at the same time that we possess widely the basis of its play in time, the one and the many, the Brahman's eternal unity and eternal multiplicity. Through it we get back to the consciousness of the Absolute as the source of all these circumstances and relations, possess them all with the utmost wideness in their dependence on and their going back to their source and are therefore able to take them up and raise them to their absolute values. The original ignorance disappears. Our self-knowledge will then be complete in all its essentials and by that self-knowledge our practical ignorance which figures itself in sin, sorrow, error and all the confusions and discords of life, will automatically be removed. For of right action and right being, not in the imperfect human sense of our petty moralities, but in the large and luminous movement of a divine living, the conditions are union with God, unity with all beings and a life from within outwards in which the source of all thought, will and action shall be the Spirit working through the truth and the divine law spontaneous in the supermind.

Thus we see that the growth into the divine life is a growth out of the sevenfold ignorance into the sevenfold knowledge, and the growth is a completion of the upward process of Nature by which it heightens the forces of consciousness from principle to higher principle of being. This ascent is complete when it reaches the spiritual principle and plane and from that widens to take up all cosmic and individual existence on the lower planes into its view, so that the true individual man, conscious and free, lives out of the transcendent Divine in the universal consciousness of Sachchidananda.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE HIGHER AND THE LOWER KNOWLEDGE

We have now completed our view of the path of Knowledge and seen to what it leads. First, the end of Yoga Knowledge is God-possession, it is to possess God and be possessed by him through consciousness, through identification, through reflection of the divine Reality. But not merely in some abstraction away from our present existence, but here also ; therefore to possess the Divine in himself, the Divine in the world, the Divine within, the Divine in all things and all beings. It is to possess oneness with God and through that to possess also oneness with the universal, with the cosmos and all existences ; therefore to possess the infinite diversity also in the oneness, but on the basis of oneness and not on the basis of division. It is to possess God in his personality and his impersonality ; in his purity free from qualities and in his infinite qualities ; in time and beyond time ; in his action and in his silence ; in the finite and in the infinite. It is to possess him not only in pure self, but in all self ; not only in self, but in Nature ; not only in spirit, but in supermind, mind, life and body ; to possess him with the spirit, with the mind, with the vital and the physical consciousness ; and it is again for all these

to be possessed by him, so that our whole being is one with him, full of him, governed and driven by him. It is, since God is oneness, for our physical consciousness to be one with the soul and the nature of the material universe ; for our life, to be one with all life; for our mind, to be one with the universal mind ; for our spirit, to be identified with the universal spirit. It is to merge in him in the absolute and find him in all relations.

Secondly, it is to put on the divine being and the divine nature. And since God is Sachchidananda, it is to raise our being into the divine being, our consciousness into the divine consciousness, our energy into the divine energy, our delight of existence into the divine delight of being. And it is not only to lift ourselves into this higher consciousness, but to widen into it in all our being, because it is to be found on all the planes of our existence and in all our members, so that our mental, vital, physical existence shall become full of the divine nature. Our intelligent mentality is to become a play of the divine knowledge-will, our mental soul-life a play of the divine love and delight, our vitality a play of the divine life, our physical being a mould of the divine substance. This God-action in us is to be realised by an opening of ourselves to the divine gnosis and divine Ananda and, in its fullness, by an ascent into and a permanent dwelling in the gnosis and the Ananda. For though we live physically on the material plane and in normal outward-going life the mind and soul are preoccupied with material existence, this externality of our being is not a binding limitation. We can raise our internal consciousness from plane to plane of the relations of Purusha with Prakriti, and even become, instead of the mental being dominated by the physical soul and nature, the gnostic being or the bliss-self and assume the gnostic or the bliss nature. And by this raising of the inner life we can transform our whole outward-going existence ; instead of a life domi-

nated by matter we shall then have a life dominated by spirit with all its circumstances moulded and determined by the purity of being, the consciousness infinite even in the finite, the divine energy, the divine joy and bliss of the spirit.

This is the goal ; we have seen also what are the essentials of the method. But here we have first to consider briefly one side of the question of method which we have hitherto left untouched. In the system of an integral Yoga the principle must be that all life is a part of the Yoga ; but the knowledge which we have been describing seems to be not the knowledge of what is ordinarily understood as life, but of something behind life. There are two kinds of knowledge, that which seeks to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the intellect,—this is the lower knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world ; secondly, the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source and reality, by spiritual realisation. Ordinarily, a sharp distinction is drawn between the two, and it is supposed that when we get to the higher knowledge, the God-knowledge, then the rest, the world-knowledge, becomes of no concern to us : but in reality they are two sides of one seeking. All knowledge is ultimately the knowledge of God, through himself, through Nature, through her works. Mankind has first to seek this knowledge through the external life ; for until its mentality is sufficiently developed, spiritual knowledge is not really possible, and in proportion as it is developed, the possibilities of spiritual knowledge become richer and fuller.

Science, art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, the knowledge of man and his past, action itself are means by which we arrive at the knowledge of the workings of God through Nature and through life. At first it is the workings of life and forms of Nature which occupy us, but as

we go deeper and deeper and get a completer view and experience, each of these lines brings us face to face with God. Science at its limits, even physical Science, is compelled to perceive in the end the infinite, the universal, the spirit, the divine intelligence and will in the material universe. Still more easily must this be the end with the psychic sciences which deal with the operations of higher and subtler planes and powers of our being and come into contact with the beings and the phenomena of the worlds behind which are unseen, not sensible by our physical organs, but ascertainable by the subtle mind and senses. Art leads to the same end ; the aesthetic human being intensely preoccupied with Nature through aesthetic emotion must in the end arrive at spiritual emotion and perceive not only the infinite life, but the infinite presence within her ; preoccupied with beauty in the life of man he must in the end come to see the divine, the universal, the spiritual in humanity. Philosophy dealing with the principles of things must come to perceive the Principle of all these principles and investigate its nature, attributes and essential workings. So ethics must eventually perceive that the law of good which it seeks is the law of God and depends on the being and nature of the Master of the law. Psychology leads from the study of mind and the soul in living beings to the perception of the one soul and one mind in all things and beings. The history and study of man like the history and study of Nature lead towards the perception of the eternal and universal Power and Being whose thought and will work out through the cosmic and human evolution. Action itself forces us into contact with the divine Power which works through, uses, overrules our actions. The intellect begins to perceive and understand, the emotions to feel and desire and revere, the will to turn itself to the service of the Divine without whom Nature and man cannot exist or move and by conscious knowledge of whom alone we can arrive at our

highest possibilities.

It is here that Yoga steps in. It begins by using knowledge, emotion and action for the possession of the Divine. For Yoga is the conscious and perfect seeking of union with the Divine towards which all the rest was an ignorant and imperfect moving and seeking. At first, then, Yoga separates itself from the action and method of the lower knowledge. For while this lower knowledge approaches God indirectly from outside and never enters his secret dwelling-place, Yoga calls us within and approaches him directly ; while that seeks him through the intellect and becomes conscious of him from behind a veil, Yoga seeks him through realisation, lifts the veil and get the full vision ; where that only feels the presence and the influence, Yoga enters into the presence and fills itself with the influence ; where that is only aware of the workings and through them gets some glimpse of the Reality, Yoga identifies our inner being with the Reality and sees from that the workings. Therefore the methods of Yoga are different from the methods of the lower knowledge.

The method of Yoga in knowledge must always be a turning of the eye inward and, so far as it looks upon outer things, a penetrating of the surface appearances to get at the one eternal reality within them. The lower knowledge is preoccupied with the appearances and workings ; it is the first necessity of the higher to get away from them to the Reality of which they are the appearances and the Being and Power of conscious existence of which they are the workings. It does this by three movements each necessary to each other, by each of which the others become complete,—purification, concentration, identification. The object of purification is to make the whole mental being a clear mirror in which the divine reality can be reflected, a clear vessel and an unobstructing channel into which the divine presence and

through which the divine influence can be poured, a subtilised stuff which the divine nature can take possession of, new-shape and use to divine issues. For the mental being at present reflects only the confusions created by the mental and physical view of the world, is a channel only for the disorders of the ignorant lower nature and full of obstructions and impurities which prevent the higher from acting ; therefore the whole shape of our being is deformed and imperfect, indocile to the highest influences and turned in its action to ignorant and inferior utilities. It reflects even the world falsely ; it is incapable of reflecting the Divine.

Concentration is necessary, first, to turn the whole will and mind from the discursive divagation natural to them, following a dispersed movement of the thoughts, running after many-branching desires, led away in the track of the senses and the outward mental response to phenomena : we have to fix the will and the thought on the eternal and real behind all, and this demands an immense effort, a one-pointed concentration. Secondly, it is necessary in order to break down the veil which is erected by our ordinary mentality between ourselves and the truth ; for outer knowledge can be picked up by the way, by ordinary attention and reception, but the inner, hidden and higher truth can only be seized by an absolute concentration of the mind on its object, an absolute concentration of the will to attain it and, once attained, to hold it habitually and securely unite oneself with it. For identification is the condition of complete knowledge and possession ; it is the intense result of a habitual purified reflecting of the reality and an entire concentration on it ; and it is necessary in order to break down entirely that division and separation of ourselves from the divine being and the eternal reality which is the normal condition of our unregenerated ignorant mentality.

None of these things can be done by the methods

of the lower knowledge. It is true that here also they have a preparing action, but up to a certain point and to a certain degree of intensity only, and it is where their action ceases that the action of Yoga takes up our growth into the Divine and finds the means to complete it. All pursuit of knowledge, if not vitiated by a too earthward tendency, tends to refine, to subtilise, to purify the being. In proportion as we become more mental, we attain to a subtler action of our whole nature which becomes more apt to reflect and receive higher thoughts, a purer will, a less physical truth, more inward influences. The power of ethical knowledge and the ethical habit of thought and will to purify is obvious. Philosophy not only purifies the reason and predisposes it to the contact of the universal and the infinite, but tends to stabilise the nature and create the tranquillity of the sage ; and tranquillity is a sign of increasing self-mastery and purity. The preoccupation with universal beauty even in its aesthetic forms has an intense power for refining and subtilising the nature, and at its highest it is a great force for purification. Even the scientific habit of mind and the disinterested preoccupation with cosmic law and truth not only refine the reasoning and observing faculty, but have, when not counteracted by other tendencies, a steadying, elevating and purifying influence on the mind and moral nature which has not been sufficiently noticed.

The concentration of the mind and the training of the will towards the reception of the truth and living in the truth is also an evident result, a perpetual necessity of these pursuits ; and at the end or in their highest intensities they may and do lead first to an intellectual, then to a reflective perception of the divine Reality which may culminate in a sort of preliminary identification with it. But all this cannot go beyond a certain point. The systematic purification of the whole being for an integral reflection and taking in of the divine reality can only be

done by the special methods of Yoga. Its absolute concentration has to take the place of the dispersed concentrations of the lower knowledge ; the vague and ineffective identification which is all the lower knowledge can bring, has to be replaced by the complete, intimate, imperative and living union which Yoga brings.

Nevertheless, Yoga does not either in its path or in its attainment exclude and throw away the forms of the lower knowledge, except when it takes the shape of an extreme asceticism or a mysticism altogether intolerant of this other divine mystery of the world-existence. It separates itself from them by the intensity, largeness and height of its objective and the specialisation of its methods to suit its aim ; but it not only starts from them, but for a certain part of the way carries them with it and uses them as auxiliaries. Thus it is evident how largely ethical thought and practice,—not so much external as internal conduct,—enter into the preparatory method of Yoga, into its aim at purity. Again the whole method of Yoga is psychological ; it might almost be termed the consummate practice of a perfect psychological knowledge. The data of philosophy are the supports from which it begins in the realisation of God through the principles of his being ; only it carries the intelligent understanding which is all philosophy gives, into an intensity which carries it beyond thought into vision and beyond understanding into realisation and possession ; what philosophy leaves abstract and remote, it brings into a living nearness and spiritual concreteness. The aesthetic and emotional mind and aesthetic forms are used by Yoga as a support for concentration even in the Yoga of Knowledge and are, sublimated, the whole means of the Yoga of love and delight, as life and action, sublimated, are the whole means of the Yoga of works. Contemplation of God in Nature, contemplation and service of God in man and in the life of man and of the world in its past, present

and future, are equally elements of which the Yoga of knowledge can make use to complete the realisation of God in all things. Only, all is directed to the one aim, directed towards God, filled with the idea of the divine, infinite, universal existence so that the outward-going, sensuous, pragmatical preoccupation of the lower knowledge with phenomena and forms is replaced by the one divine preoccupation. After attainment the same character remains. The Yogin continues to know and see God in the finite and be a channel of God-consciousness and God-action in the world ; therefore the knowledge of the world and the enlarging and uplifting of all that appertains to life comes within his scope. Only, in all he sees God, sees the supreme reality, and his motive of work is to help mankind towards the knowledge of God and the possession of the supreme reality. He sees God through the data of science, God through the conclusions of philosophy, God through the forms of Beauty and the forms of Good, God in all the activities of life, God in the past of the world and its effects, in the present and its tendencies, in the future and its great progression. Into any or all of these he can bring his illumined vision and his liberated power of the spirit. The lower knowledge has been the step from which he has risen to the higher ; the higher illumines for him the lower and makes it part of itself, even if only its lower fringe and most external radiation.

Essays on the Gita

THE DIVINE BIRTH AND DIVINE WORKS

(3)

The work for which the Avatar descends has like his birth a double sense and a double form. It has an outward side of the divine force acting upon the external world in order to maintain there and to reshape the divine law by which the Godward effort of humanity is kept from decisive retrogression and instead decisively carried forward in spite of the rule of action and reaction, the rhythm of advance and relapse by which Nature acts ; it has an inward side of the divine force of the Godward consciousness acting upon the soul of the individual and the soul of the race, so that it may receive new forms of the revelation of the Divine in man and may be sustained, renewed and enriched in its power of upward self-unfolding. The Avatar does not descend merely for a great outward action, as the pragmatic sense in humanity is too often tempted to suppose. Action and event have no value in themselves, but only take their value from the force which they represent and the idea which they symbolise and which the force is there to serve.

The crisis in which the Avatar appears, though apparent to the outward eye only as a crisis of events and great material changes, is always in its source and real

meaning a crisis in the consciousness of humanity when it has to undergo some grand modification and effect some new development. For this action of change a divine force is needed ; but the force varies always according to the power of consciousness which it embodies ; hence the necessity of a divine consciousness manifesting in the mind and soul of humanity. Where, indeed, the change is mainly intellectual and practical, the intervention of the Avatar is not needed ; there is a great uplifting of consciousness, a great manifestation of power in which men are for the time being exalted above their normal selves, and this surge of consciousness and power finds its wave-crests in certain exceptional individuals, *vibhûtis*, whose action leading the general action is sufficient for the change intended. The Reformation in Europe and the French Revolution were crises of this character ; they were not great spiritual events, but intellectual and practical changes, one in religious, the other in social and political ideas, forms and motives, and the modification of the general consciousness brought about was a mental and dynamic, but not a spiritual modification. But when the crisis has a spiritual seed or intention, then a complete or a partial manifestation of the God-consciousness in a human mind and soul comes as its originator or leader. That is the Avatar.

The outward action of the Avatar is described in the Gita as the restoration of the Dharma ; when from age to age the Dharma fades, languishes, loses force and its opposite arises, strong and oppressive, then the Avatar comes and raises it again to power ; and as these things in idea are always represented by things in action and by human beings who obey their impulsion, his mission is, in its most human and outward terms, to deliver the seekers of the Dharma who are oppressed by the reign of the reactionary darkness and destroy the wrongdoers who seek to maintain the denial of the Dharma. But the

language used can easily be given a poor and insufficient connotation which would deprive Avatarhood of all its spiritual depth of meaning. Dharma is a word which has an ethical and practical, a natural and philosophical and a religious and spiritual significance, and it may be used in any of these senses exclusive of the others, in a purely ethical, a purely philosophical or a purely religious sense. Ethically it means the law of righteousness, the ethical rule, or in a still more outward and practical significance social and political justice, or even simply the observation of the social law. If used in this sense we shall have to understand that when unrighteousness, injustice and oppression prevail, the Avatar descends to deliver the good and destroy the wicked, to break down injustice and oppression and restore the ethical balance of mankind.

Thus the popular and mythical account of the Krishna avatar is that the unrighteousness of the Kurus as incarnated in Duryodhana and his brothers became so great a burden to the earth that she had to call upon God to descend and lighten her load ; accordingly Vishnu incarnated as Krishna, delivered the oppressed Pandavas and destroyed the unjust Kauravas. A similar account is given of the descent of the previous Vishnu avatars, of Rama to destroy the unrighteous oppression of Ravana, Parshurama to destroy the unrighteous license of the military and princely caste, the Kshatriyas, of the dwarf Vamana to destroy the rule of the Titan Bali. But obviously the purely practical, ethical or social and political mission of the Avatar which is thus thrown into popular and mythical form, does not give a right account of the phenomenon of Avatarhood. It does not cover its spiritual sense, and if this outward utility were all, we should have to exclude Buddha and Christ whose mission was not at all to destroy evildoers and deliver the good, but to bring to all mankind a new spiritual message and a new law of divine growth and spiritual realisation. On the

other hand, if we give to the word dharma only its religious sense, in which it means a law of religious and spiritual life, we shall indeed get to the kernel of the matter, but we shall be in danger of excluding a most important part of the work done by the Avatar. Always we see in the history of the divine incarnations the double work, and inevitably, because the Avatar takes up the workings of God in human life, the divine Will and Wisdom in the world, and that always fulfils itself externally as well as internally, by inner progress in the soul and by an outer change in the life.

The Avatar may descend as a great spiritual teacher and saviour, the Christ, the Buddha, but always his work leads, after he has finished his earthly manifestation, to a profound and powerful change not only in the ethical, but in the social and outward life and ideals of the race. He may, on the other hand, descend as an incarnation of the divine life, the divine personality and power in its characteristic action, for a mission ostensibly social, ethical and political, as is represented in the story of Rama or Krishna ; but always then this descent becomes in the soul of the race a permanent power for the inner living and the spiritual rebirth. It is indeed curious to note that the permanent, vital, universal effect of Buddhism and Christianity has been the force of their ethical, social and practical ideals and influence even on the men and the ages which have rejected their religious and spiritual beliefs, forms and disciplines ; later Hinduism which rejected Buddha, his *sangha* and his *dharma*, bears the ineffaceable imprint of the ethical influence of Buddhism and its effect on the ideas and the life of the race, while in modern Europe, Christian only in name, humanitarianism is the translation into the ethical and social sphere and the aspiration to liberty, equality and fraternity the translation into the social and political sphere of the spiritual truths of Christianity, the latter especially being effected by men who aggressively

rejected the Christian religion and spiritual discipline and by an age which in its intellectual effort of emancipation tried to get rid of Christianity as a creed. On the other hand the life of Rama and Krishna belongs to the prehistoric past which has come down only in poetry and legend and may even be regarded as myths ; but it is quite immaterial whether we regard them as myths or historical facts, because their permanent truth and value lie in their persistence as a spiritual form, presence, influence in the inner consciousness of the race and the life of the human soul. Avatarhood is a fact of divine life and consciousness which may realise itself in an outward action, but must persist, when that action is over and has done its work, in a spiritual presence and influence; or may realise itself in a spiritual influence and teaching, but must then have its permanent effect, even when the new religion or discipline is exhausted, in the thought, temperament and outward life of mankind.

We must then, in order to understand the Gita's description of the work of the Avatar, take the idea of the Dharma in its fullest, deepest and largest conception, as the inner and the outer law by which the divine Will and Wisdom work out the spiritual evolution of mankind and its circumstances and results in the life of the race. Dharma in the Indian conception is not merely the good, the right, morality and justice, ethics ; it is the whole government of all the relations of man with other beings, with Nature, with God, considered from the point of view of a divine principle working itself out in forms and laws of action, forms of the inner and the outer life, orderings of relations of every kind in the world. Dharma* is both that which we hold to and that which holds together our inner and outer activities. In its primary sense it means a

* The word means "holding" from the root *dhri.* to hold.

fundamental law of our nature which secretly conditions all our activities, and in this sense each being, type, species, individual, group has its own dharma. Secondly, there is the divine nature which has to develop and manifest in us, and in this sense dharma is the law of the inner workings by which that grows in our being. Thirdly, there is the law by which we govern our outgoing thought and action and our relations with each other so as to help best both our own growth and that of the human race towards the divine ideal.

Dharma is generally spoken of as something eternal and unchanging, and so it is in the fundamental principle, in the ideal, but in its forms it is continually changing and evolving, because man does not already possess the ideal or live in it, but aspires more or less perfectly towards it, is growing towards its knowledge and practice. And in this growth dharma is all that helps us to grow into the divine purity, largeness, light, freedom, power, strength, joy, love, good, unity, beauty, and against it stands its shadow and denial, all that resists its growth and has not undergone its law, all that has not yielded up and does not will to yield up its secret of divine values, but presents a front of perversion and contradiction, of impurity, narrowness, bondage, darkness, weakness, villainess, discord and suffering and division, and the hideous and the crude, all that man has to leave behind in his progress. This is the *adharma*, not-dharma, which strives with and seeks to overcome the dharma, to draw backward and downward, the reactionary force which makes for evil, ignorance and darkness. Between the two there is perpetual battle and struggle, oscillation of victory and defeat in which sometimes the upward and sometimes the downward forces prevail. This has been typified in the Vedic image of the struggle between the divine and the Titanic powers, the sons of the Light and the undivided Infinity and the children of the Darkness and Division,

in Zoroastrianism by Ahuramazda and Ahriman, and in later religions in the contest between God and his angels and Satan or Iblis and his demons for the possession of human life and the human soul.

It is these things that condition and determine the work of the Avatar. In the Buddhistic formula the disciple takes refuge from all that opposes his liberation in three powers, the *dharma*, the *sangha*, the Buddha. So in Christianity we have the law of Christian living, the Church and the Christ. These three are always the necessary elements of the work of the Avatar. He gives a *dharma*, a law of self-discipline by which to grow out of the lower into the higher life and which necessarily includes a rule of action and of relations with our fellow-men and other beings, endeavour in the eightfold path or the law of faith, love and purity or any other such revelation of the nature of the divine in life. Then because every tendency in man has its collective as well as its individual aspect, because those who follow one way are naturally drawn together into spiritual companionship and unity, he establishes the *sangha*, the fellowship and union of those whom his personality and his teaching unite. In Vaishnavism there is the same trio, *bhāgavat*, *bhakta*, *bhagavân*,—the *bhāgavat*, which is the law of the Vaishnava dispensation of adoration and love, the *bhakta* representing the fellowship of those in whom that law is manifest, *bhagavân*, the divine Lover and Beloved in whose being and nature the divine law of love is founded and fulfils itself. The Avatar represents this third element, the divine personality, nature and being who is the soul of the *dharma* and the *sangha*, informs them with himself, keeps them living and draws men towards the felicity and the liberation.

In the teaching of the Gita, which is more catholic and complex than other specialised teachings and disciplines, these things assume a larger meaning. For the

unity here is the all-embracing Vedantic unity by which the soul sees all in itself and itself in all and makes itself one with all beings. The dharma is therefore the taking up of all human relations into a higher divine meaning ; starting from the established ethical, social and religious rule which binds together the whole community in which the God-seeker lives, it lifts it up by informing it with the Brahmic consciousness ; the law it gives is the law of oneness, of equality, of liberated, desireless, God-governed action, of God-knowledge and self-knowledge enlightening and drawing to itself all the nature and all the action, drawing it towards divine being and divine consciousness, and of God-love as the supreme power and crown of the knowledge and the action. The idea of companionship and mutual aid in God-love and God-seeking which is at the basis of the idea of the *sangha* or divine fellowship, is brought in when the Gita speaks of the seeking of God through love and adoration, but the real *sangha* of this teaching is all humanity. The whole world is moving towards this dharma, each man according to his capacity,—“ it is my path that men follow in every way,”—and the God-seeker, making himself one with all, making their joy and sorrow and all their life his own, the liberated made already one self with all beings, lives in the life of humanity, lives for the one Self in humanity, for God in all beings, acts for *lokasaugraha*, for the maintaining of all in their dharma and the dharma, for the maintenance of their growth in all its stages and in all its paths towards the Divine. For the Avatar here, though he is manifest in the name and form of Krishna, lays no stress on this one form of his human birth, but on that which it represents, the Divine, the Purushottama, of whom all Avatars are the human births, of whom all forms and names of the Godhead worshipped by men are the figures. The way declared by Krishna here is indeed announced as the way by which man can reach the real knowledge and the

real liberation, but it is one that is inclusive of all paths and not exclusive. For the Divine takes up into his universality all Avatars and all teachings and all dharmas.

The Gita lays stress upon the struggle of which the world is the theatre, in its two aspects, the inner struggle and the outer battle. In the inner struggle the enemies are within, in the individual, and the slaying of desire, ignorance, egoism is the victory. But there is an outer struggle between the powers of the Dharma and the Adharma in the human collectivity. The former is supported by the divine, the godlike nature in man, and by those who represent it or strive to realise it in human life, the latter by the Titanic or demoniac, the Asuric and Rakshasic nature whose head is a violent egoism, and by those who represent and strive to satisfy it. This is the war of the Gods and Titans, the symbol of which the old Indian literature is full, the struggle of the Mahabharata of which Krishna is the central figure being often represented in that image; the Pandavas who fight for the establishment of the kingdom of the Dharma, are the sons of the Gods, their powers in human form, their adversaries are incarnations of the Titanic powers, they are Asuras. This outer struggle too the Avatar comes to aid, directly or indirectly, to destroy the reign of the Asuras, the evildoers, and in them depress the power they represent and to restore the oppressed ideals of the Dharma. He comes to bring nearer the kingdom of heaven on earth in the collectivity as well as to build the kingdom of heaven within in the individual human soul.

The inner fruit of the Avatar's coming is gained by those who learn from it the true nature of the divine birth and the divine works and who by growing full of him in their consciousness and taking refuge in him with their whole being, *manmavâ mām upâśritâh*, purified by the realising force of their knowledge and delivered from the lower nature, attain to the divine being and divine

nature, *madbhâvam*. The Avatar comes to reveal the divine nature in man above this lower nature and to show what are the divine works, free, unegoistic, disinterested, impersonal, universal, full of the divine light, the divine power and the divine love. He comes as the divine personality which shall fill the consciousness of the human being and replace the limited egoistic personality, so that it shall be liberated out of ego into infinity and universality, out of birth into immortality. He comes as the divine power and love which calls men to itself, so that they may take refuge in that and no longer in the insufficiency of their human wills and the strife of their human fear, wrath and passion, and liberated from all this unquiet and suffering may live in the calm and bliss of the Divine.* Nor does it matter essentially in what form and name or putting forward what aspect of the Divine he comes ; for in whatever way men accept, love and take joy in God, in that way God accepts, loves and takes joy in man. *Ye yathâ mâm prapadyante tâns tathaiva bhajâmyaham*.

^c Janma karma cha me divyam evam yo veti tattwatah.
 Tyaktvâ deham punarjanma naïti mam eti so' rjuna.
 Vitarâgabhayakrodhâ manmayâ mâm upâsritâh.
 Bahavo jûânatapasâ pûta madbhâvam âgatâh.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

III

THE CONQUEST OF SELF

TO RENOUNCE THE FRUIT OF WORKS

- 1 Personal success ought never to be considered the aim of existence.
- 2 One does not need to hope in order to act, nor to
- 3 succeed in order to persevere.—The superior man perseveres in the middle path. Even though he remains unknown and the world esteems him not, he feels no regret. The sage alone is capable of such an action.
- 4 Poor souls are they whose work is for a reward.—
- 5 Thou hast a right only to work, but never to its fruits.
- 6 It is impossible for man who has a body to abstain absolutely from all action, but whoever renounces its fruits, is the man of true renunciation.
- 7 He who sees that in inaction there is an act and that in works there can be freedom from the act, is

1) Bacon.—2) William the Silent.—3) Tsaug-Yung.—4) Bhagavad Gita. 2.49.— 5) id. 2.47.— 6) id. 18.11.— 7) id. 4.18,20.—

the wise among men...When a man has given up the fruit of his works and is eternally content and without dependence upon things, then though occupied in works, it is not he that is doing any act.

- 8 When anyone does good without troubling himself for the result, ambition and malevolence pass
9 quickly away from him.—When the man who does good, ceases to concern himself with the result of his act, ambition and wrath are extinguished within
10 him.—The act done under right rule, with detachment, without liking or dislike, by the man who grasps not at the fruit, that is a work of light.
11 A one-minded pursuit of the inner joys kills ambition.
12 The Master has said, "To pore over mysterious things and do miracles that I may be cited with honour in future times, this is what I will not do."
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Hymns of the Atris

A HYMN TO SAVITRI

[The Rishi hymns the Sun-God as the source of divine knowledge and the creator of the inner worlds. To him, the Seer, the seekers of light yoke their mind and thoughts ; he, the one knower of all forms of knowledge, is the one supreme ordainer of the sacrifice. He assumes all forms as the robes of his being and his creative sight and creates the supreme good and happiness for the two forms of life in the worlds. He manifests the heavenly world, shining in the path of the dawn of divine knowledge ; in that path the other godheads follow him and it is his greatness of light that they make the goal of all their energies. He has measured out for us our earthly worlds by his power and greatness : but it is in the three worlds of light that he attains to his real greatness of manifestation in the rays of the divine sun ; then he encompasses the night of our darkness with his being and his light and becomes Mitra who by his laws produces the luminous harmony of our higher and lower worlds. Of all our creation he is the one author, and by his forward marches he is its increaser until the whole world of our becoming grows full of his illumination.]

1. The illumined yoke their mind and they yoke their thoughts to the illumined godhead to the vast, to the luminous in consciousness ; the one knower

of all manifestation of knowledge, he alone orders the things of the sacrifice. Great is the praise of Savitri, the creating godhead.

2. All forms are robes the Seer puts on that he may create the good and bliss for the double and the quadruple 1 creature. Savitri describes by his light our heavenly world; supreme is he and desirable, wide is the light of his shining in the march of the Dawn.

3. And in that march all the other gods in their might follow after the greatness of this godhead. This is that bright god Savitri who by his power and greatness has measured out our earthly worlds of light.

4. But also thou goest, O Savitri, to the three shining worlds of heaven and thou art made manifest by the rays of the Sun, and thou encirclest on both sides the Night, and thou becomest Mitra, O god, with his settled laws of Truth.

5. And thou alone hast power for the creation and thou becomest the Increaser. O god, by thy marchings in thy path. and thou illuminest all this world of the becoming. Ç'yâvâçva, O Savitri has found the affirmation of thy godhead.

1. Literally, two-footed and four-footed, but *pad* also means the step, the principle on which the soul founds itself. The esoteric meaning is four-principled, those who dwell in the fourfold principle of the lower world, and two-principled, those who dwell in the double principle of the divine and the human.

The Psychology of Social Development

XVII

Since the infinite, the absolute, the universal, the one, in a word the Divine is the secret goal and aim of all being and action and therefore of the whole development of the individual and the collectivity in all its parts and all its activities, reason cannot be the last and highest guide ; culture, as it is understood ordinarily, cannot be the directing light or find out the regulating and harmonising principle of all our life and action. For reason stops short of the Divine and only compromises with the problems of life, and culture in order to attain it must become spiritual culture, something much more than an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and practical training. Where then are we to find the directing light and the regulating and harmonising principle ? The first answer which will suggest itself and which has been given by the Asiatic mind, is that we shall find it immediately in religion ; and this seems a reasonable and at first sight a satisfying answer, for religion is that instinct, idea, activity, discipline in man which aims directly at the Divine, while all the rest seem to aim at it only indirectly and reach it with difficulty after much wandering and stumbling in the pursuit

of the outward and imperfect appearances of things. To make all life religion and to govern all activities by the religious idea would seem to be the right way to the development of the ideal individual and ideal society and the lifting of the whole life of man into the Divine.

This preeminence of religion, this overshadowing of all the other instincts and fundamental ideas by the religious instinct and the religious idea is, we may note, not peculiar to Asiatic civilisations, but has always been more or less the normal state of the human mind and of human societies, except in certain comparatively brief periods of its history, in one of which we find ourselves today, are half turning indeed to emerge from it, but have not yet emerged. We must suppose then that in this leading, this predominant part assigned to religion by the normal human collectivity there is some great need and truth of our natural being to which we must always after however long an infidelity return. On the other hand, we must recognise that often in times of great activity, of high aspiration, of deep sowing, of rich fruit-bearing, such as the modern age with all its faults and errors has been, a time especially when humanity has got rid of much that was cruel, evil, ignorant, dark, odious, not by the power of religion, but by the power of the awakened intelligence and of human idealism and sympathy, this predominance of religion has been violently attacked and rejected by that portion of humanity which was for that time the standard-bearer of human thought and progress, Europe after the Renaissance, modern Europe.

This revolt in its extreme form tried to destroy religion altogether, boasted indeed of having killed the religious instinct in man,—a vain and ignorant boast, as we now see, for the religious instinct in man is most of all the one instinct in him that cannot be killed, it only changes its form. In its more moderate forms the revolt put religion aside into a corner of the soul by itself and banished its in-

termiscence in the intellectual, aesthetic, practical life and even in the ethical ; and it did this on the ground that the intermixture of religion in science, thought, politics, society, life in general had been and must be a force for retardation, superstition, oppression, ignorance. The religionist may say that this was all error and atheistic perversity, or he may say that a religious retardation, a pious ignorance, a contented static condition or even an orderly stagnation full of holy thoughts of the beyond is much better than a continuous endeavour after greater knowledge, greater mastery, more happiness, joy, light upon this transient earth. But the catholic thinker cannot accept such a plea ; he is obliged to see that so long as man has not realised the divine and the ideal in his life, progress and not unmoving status is the necessary and desirable law of his life, not indeed any breathless rush after novelties, but a seeking after a greater and greater truth of the spirit, the thought and the life not only in the individual, but in the collectivity, in the spirit, ideals, temperament, make of the society. And he is obliged too to see that the indictment against religion, not in its conclusion, but in its premiss had something, had even much to justify it,—not that religion in itself must be, but that historically and as a matter of fact the accredited religions and their hierarchs and exponents have too often been a force for retardation, have too often thrown their weight on the side of darkness, oppression and ignorance, and that it has needed a denial, a revolt of the oppressed human mind and heart to correct these errors and set religion right. And why should this have been if religion is the true and sufficient guide and regulator of all human activities and the whole of human life ?

We need not follow the rationalistic or atheistic mind through all its aggressive indictment of religion. We need not for instance lay excessive stress on the superstitions, aberrations, violences, crimes even, which Churches and

cults and creeds have favoured, admitted, sanctioned, supported or exploited for their own benefit, the mere hostile enumeration of which might lead one to echo the cry of the atheistic Roman poet, "To such a mass of ills has religion been able to persuade mankind." As well might one cite the crimes and errors which have been committed in the name of liberty as a sufficient condemnation of the ideal of liberty. But we have to note the fact that such a thing was possible and to find its explanation. We cannot ignore for instance the blood-stained and fiery track which formal, external Christianity has left furrowed across the mediaeval history of Europe almost from the days of Constantine, its first hour of secular triumph, down to very recent times, or the sanguinary comment which such an institution as the Inquisition affords on the claim of religion to be the directing light and regulating power in ethics and society, or religious wars and wide-spread State persecutions on its claim to guide the political life of mankind. But we must observe the root of this evil, which is not in true religion itself, but in our ignorant human confusion of religion with a particular creed, sect, cult, religious society or church. So strong is the human tendency to this error that even the old tolerant Paganism slew Socrates in the name of religion and morality, feebly persecuted non-national religions like the cult of Isis or the cult of Mithra and more vigorously what it conceived to be the subversive and anti-social religion of the early Christians; and even in still more fundamentally tolerant Hinduism it led to the mutual hatred and occasional persecution of Buddhist, Jain, Shaiva, Vaishnava.

The whole root of the historical insufficiency of religion as a guide and control of human society lies there. Churches and creeds have, for example, stood violently in the way of philosophy and science, burned a Giordano Bruno, imprisoned a Galileo, and so generally misconducted themselves in this matter that philosophy and

science had in self-defence to turn upon Religion and rend her to pieces in order to get a free field for their legitimate development ; and this because men had chosen to think that religion was bound up with certain fixed intellectual conceptions about God and the world which could not stand scrutiny, and therefore scrutiny had to be put down by fire and sword ; scientific and philosophical truth had to be denied in order that religious error might survive. We see too a narrow religious spirit often oppressing and impoverishing the joy and beauty of life, either from an intolerant asceticism or, as the Puritans attempted it, because they could not see that a religious austerity was not the whole of religion, though it might be an important side of it, was not the sole ethico-religious approach to God, since love, charity, gentleness, tolerance, kindliness are also and even more divine, and they forgot or never knew that God is love and beauty as well as purity. In politics religion has often thrown itself on the side of power and resisted the coming of larger political ideals, because it was itself in the form of a Church supported by power and because it confused religion with the Church, or because it stood for a false theocracy, forgetting that true theocracy is the kingdom of God and not the kingdom of a Pope, a priesthood or a sacerdotal class. So too it has often supported a rigid and outworn social system, because it thought its own life bound up with social forms with which it happened to have been associated during a long portion of its own history, and erroneously concluded that even a necessary change there would be a violation of religion and a danger to its existence ; as if so mighty and inward a thing as the religious spirit in man could be destroyed by so small a thing as the change of a social form or so outward a thing as a social readjustment ! This error in its many forms has been the great weakness of religion as practised in the past and the opportunity and justification for the revolt

of the intelligence, the aesthetic sense, the social and political idealism, even the ethical spirit of the human being against what should have been its own highest tendency and law.

Here then lies one secret of the divergence between the ancient and the modern, the Eastern and Western ideal, and here also one clue to their reconciliation. Both rest upon a certain strong justification and their quarrel is due to a misunderstanding. It is true that religion should be the dominant thing in life, its light and law, but religion as it should be and is in its inner nature, its fundamental law of being, a seeking after God, the cult of spirituality ; on the other hand it is true that religion when it identifies itself only with a creed, a cult, a Church, a system of ceremonial forms, may well become a retarding force and that it may become a necessity for the human spirit to reject its control over the varied activities of life. There are two aspects of religion, true religion and religionism. True religion is spiritual religion, that which seeks to live in the spirit, in what is beyond the intellect, beyond the aesthetic and ethical and practical being of man, and to inform and govern these members of our being by the light and law of the spirit. Religionism on the contrary entrenches itself in some narrow pietistic exaltation of the lower members, lays therefore exclusive stress on intellectual dogmas, forms and ceremonies, on some fixed and inflexible moral code, on some religio-political or religio-social system. Not that these things are negligible or unworthy or unnecessary, or that spiritual religion disdains their aid ; on the contrary, they are needed, because the lower members have to be exalted and raised before they can be spiritualised, before they can feel the spirit and obey its law. But these things are aids and supports, not the essence. They have to be offered to man and used by him, but not to be imposed on him as his sole law by a forced and inflexible domination. In the

use of them toleration and free permission of variation is the first rule which should be observed. The spiritual essence of religion is alone the one thing supremely needful to which we have always to hold.

But here comes in an ambiguity which brings in a deeper source of divergence. For by spirituality religion seems often to mean something remote from earthly life, different from it, hostile to it. It seems to declare the pursuit of earthly life and the hopes of man on earth a thing incompatible with the spiritual life or the hope of man in heaven. The spirit then becomes something aloof which man can only reach by throwing away the life of his lower members, either by abandoning it after a certain point, when it has served its purpose, or by persistently discouraging, mortifying and killing it. If that be the true sense of religion, then obviously religion has no positive message for human society in the proper field of social effort, hope and aspiration or for any of the lower members of our being. For each principle of our life seeks naturally for perfection in its own sphere and, if it is to obey a higher power, it must be because that power gives it a greater perfection and a fuller satisfaction even in its own field. But if perfectibility is denied to it and therefore the aspiration to perfection taken away by the spiritual urge, then it must either lose faith in itself and power to pursue the natural expansion of its energies and activities or it must reject the call of the spirit in order to follow its own bent and law, its own *dharma*. This quarrel between earth and heaven, between the spirit and its members becomes still more sterilising, if spirituality takes the form of a religion of sorrow and suffering and austere mortification and the vanity of things ; in its exaggeration it leads to such nightmares of the soul as that terrible gloom and hopelessness of the Middle Ages at their worst, when the one hope of mankind seemed to be in the approaching and expected end of the

world, an inevitable and desirable *pralaya*. But even in less pronounced and intolerant forms of this pessimistic attitude with regard to the world, it becomes a force for the discouragement of life and cannot, therefore, be a true law and guide for life. All pessimism is to that extent a denial of the Spirit, of its fullness and power, an impatience with the ways of God in the world, an insufficient faith in the divine wisdom and power which created the world and guides it. It admits a wrong notion about that wisdom and power and therefore cannot itself be the supreme wisdom and power of the spirit to which the world can look for guidance and for the uplifting of its whole life towards the Divine.

The Western recoil from religion, that minimising of its claim and insistence by which Europe progressed from the mediaeval religious attitude through the Renaissance and the Reformation to the modern rationalistic attitude which makes the ordinary earthly life its one preoccupation and seeks to fulfil it by the law of the lower members divorced from all spiritual seeking, is the other extreme, the opposite swing of the pendulum. It is an error because perfection cannot be found in such a limitation and restriction, which denies the complete law of human existence and its deepest urge and most secret impulse. Only by the light and power of the highest can the lower be guided, uplifted and fulfilled. The lower life of man is in form undivine, though in it there is the secret of the divine, and it can only be divinised by finding the higher law and the spiritual illumination. On the other hand the impatience which flees from life or discourages its growth because it is at present undivine and is not in harmony with the spiritual life, is also an error. The monk, the mere ascetic may indeed find by it his own individual and peculiar salvation, as the materialist may find the appropriate rewards of his energy and concentrated seeking; but he cannot be the true guide of mankind and its law-

giver. For his whole attitude implies a fear, an aversion, a distrust of life and its aspirations, and one cannot wisely guide that with which one is entirely out of sympathy, that which one wishes to minimise and discourage. The pure ascetic spirit directing life and human society can only prepare it to be a means for denying and getting away from itself ; it may tolerate the lower activities, but only with a view to persuading them to minimise and finally cease from their own action. The spiritual man who can guide human life towards its perfection is typified in the ancient Indian idea of the Rishi, who living the life of man has found the word of the supra-intellectual, supra-mental, spiritual truth. He has risen above these lower limitations and can view all things from above, but also he is in sympathy with their effort and can view them from within ; he has the complete knowledge and the higher knowledge. Therefore he can guide the world humanly as God guides it divinely, because like the Divine he is in the life of the world and yet above it.

In spirituality, then, understood in this sense we must seek for the directing light and the harmonising law, and in religion in proportion as it identifies itself with this spirituality. So long as it falls short of this, it is one human activity and power among others, though the most important and the most powerful, and cannot wholly guide the others. If it seeks always to fix them into the limits of a creed, an unchangeable law, a particular system, it must be prepared to see them revolting from its control ; for although they may accept this impress for a time and greatly profit by it, in the end they must move by the law of their being towards a freer scope and activity. Spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul, because it is itself fulfilled by freedom ; and the deepest meaning of freedom is the power to expand and grow towards perfection by the law of one's own nature, one's *dharma*. This liberty it will give to all the fundamental parts of

our being. It will give that freedom to philosophy and science which ancient Indian religion gave,—freedom even to deny the spirit, if they will,—as a result of which philosophy and science never found in ancient India the necessity of divorcing themselves from religion, but grew into it and under its light. It will give the same freedom to man's seeking for political and social perfection and to all his other powers and aspirations. Only it will seek to illuminate them so that they may grow into the light and law of the spirit, not by suppression and restriction, but by expansion and a many-sided finding of their greatest, highest and deepest potentialities. For all these are potentialities of the spirit.

The Ideal of Human Unity

CHAPTER XXVIII

We have constantly to keep in view the fundamental principles and realities of life if we are not to be betrayed by the arbitrary rule of the reason, the rigorous and limiting idea into experiments which, however captivating to a unitarian and symmetrical thought, may well destroy the vigour and impoverish the roots of life. For a thing may be quite perfect and satisfying to the system of the logical reason and yet ignore the truth of life and the living needs of the race. Unity is an idea which is not at all arbitrary or unreal ; for unity is the very basis of existence, and that which is secretly at the basis, the evolving spirit in Nature is moved to realise consciously at the top of its evolution. Unity the race moves towards and must one day realise. But uniformity is not the law of life ; life exists by diversity ; it insists that every group, every being shall be, even while one with all the rest in its universality, yet by some principle or ordered detail of variation unique. So too the over-centralisation which is the condition of a working uniformity, is not the healthy method of life. Order is indeed the law of life, but not an artificial regulation ; for sound order is that which comes from within as the result of the nature finding itself, finding its own law and the law of its relations with others : therefore the truest and soundest order is

that which is founded on the greatest liberty ; for liberty is at once the condition of vigorous variation and the condition of self-finding. Nature secures variation by division into groups, and insists on liberty by the force of individuality in the members of the group. Therefore, the unity of the human race to be entirely sound and in consonance with the deepest laws of life must be founded on free groupings, and the groupings again must be the natural association of free individuals. This is an ideal which it is certainly impossible to realise under present conditions or perhaps in any near future of humanity ; but it is an ideal which we ought to keep in view, for the more we can approximate to it, the more we can be sure of being on the right road. The artificiality of much in human life is the cause of its most deep-seated maladies.

The utility, the necessity of natural groupings may be seen if we consider the purpose and functioning of one great principle of division in Nature, that of language. The seeking for a common language for all mankind was very strong at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century and gave rise to several experiments, none of which got to any vital permanence. Now whatever may be the need of a common medium of communication for mankind and however it may be served by the general use either of an artificial and conventional language or of some natural tongue, as Latin, and later on to a slight extent French, was for some time the common cultural tongue of intercourse between the European nations or Sanskrit for the Indian peoples, no unification of language which destroyed or overshadowed, dwarfed and discouraged the large and free use of the varying natural languages of humanity, could fail to be detrimental to the interests of human life and progress. The legend of the Tower of Babel speaks of the diversity of tongues as a curse laid on the race ; but whatever its disadvantages, and they tend more and more to be minimised by the growth of

civilisation and increasing intercourse, it has been rather a blessing than a curse, a gift to mankind rather than a disability. The purposeless exaggeration of anything is always an evil, and an excessive pullulation of varying tongues serving no purpose in the expression of a real diversity of spirit and culture is certainly a stumbling-block rather than a help ; but this, though it existed in the past, is not now a possibility of the future: the tendency is rather the other way. In former times, too, diversity of language created a barrier to knowledge and sympathy, was often made the pretext even of an antipathy, tended to divide too rigidly, to keep up both a passive want of understanding and a fruitful crop of active misunderstandings. But this was a necessary evil of a particular stage of growth, an exaggeration of the necessity for the vigorous development of strongly individualised group-souls in humanity. These disadvantages have not yet been abolished, but with closer intercourse and the growing desire of men and nations for the knowledge of each other's thought and spirit and personality, they have diminished, tend to diminish more and more, and there is no reason why in the end they should not become inoperative.

Diversity of language serves two important ends of the human spirit, one of unification, the other of variation. A language helps to bring those who speak it into a certain large unity of growing thought, formed temperament, ripening spirit. It is an intellectual, aesthetic, mental bond which tempers division where that exists, strengthens unity where that has been achieved. Especially it gives self-consciousness to national or racial unity and creates the bond of a common self-expression and record of achievement. On the other hand it is a means, the most powerful of all perhaps, of national differentiation, not a barren principle of division merely, but a fruitful and helpful differentiation. For each language is the sign and power

of the soul of the people which naturally speaks it ; each develops therefore its own peculiar spirit, thought-temperament, way of dealing with life and knowledge and experience : it receives the thought, the life-experience, the spiritual impact of other nations, but it transforms them into something new of its own and by that power of transmutation enriches the life of humanity by its borrowings instead of merely repeating what had been gained elsewhere. Therefore it is of the utmost value to a nation, a human group-soul, to preserve its language and make of it a strong and living cultural instrument ; a nation, race or people which loses its language cannot live its whole life or its real life. And here the advantage to the national life is at the same time an advantage for the general life of humanity.

What a distinct human group loses by not possessing a separate tongue of its own or by losing the one it had, can be seen by the examples of the British colonies, the United States of America and Ireland. The colonies are really separate peoples in the psychological sense, though not separate nations. English, for the most part or at the lowest in great part, in their origin and political and social sympathy, they are yet not replicas of England, but have already a temperament, a character, a bent of their own ; but this can only be shown in the more outward and mechanical parts of life and there in no great, effective and fruitful fashion. The British colonies do not count in the culture of the world, because they have no culture, because by the fact of their speech they are and must be mere provinces of England, and whatever peculiarities they may develop in their mental life tend to create a type of provincialism and not a central intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual life of their own with its distinct importance for humanity. For the same reason the whole of America in spite of its independent political and economical being has tended to be culturally a province of

Europe, the south and centre by its dependence on the Spanish, the north by its dependence on the English language. The life of the United States alone tends and strives to become a great and separate cultural existence, but its success is not commensurate with its power. Culturally it is still to a great extent a province of England ; neither its literature, in spite of two or three great names, nor its art, its thought, nor anything else on the higher levels of the mind, has been able to arrive at a vigorous and independent maturity. And this because its instrument of self-expression, the language which the national mind ought to shape and be in turn shaped by it, was shaped and must continue to be shaped by another country with a different mentality and must there find its centre and its law of development. In old times America would have developed the English language according to its own needs until it became a new speech, as the Latinised nations dealt with Latin, and so arrived at a characteristic instrument of self-expression ; but under modern conditions this is not possible.

Ireland had its own tongue when it had its own free nationality and culture ; its loss was a loss to humanity as well as to the nation. For what might not this Celtic race with its profound spirituality and quick intelligence and delicate imagination, which did so much in the beginning for European culture and religion, have given to the world through all these centuries under natural conditions ? But the forcible imposition of a foreign tongue and the turning of a nation into a province left Ireland for so many centuries mute and culturally stagnant, a dead force in the life of Europe ; nor can we consider this loss compensated for by any indirect influence of the race upon English culture or the few direct contributions made by gifted Irishman forced to pour their natural genius into a foreign mould of thought. Even now when Ireland is striving to recover her free soul and give it a voice, she is

hampered by having to use a tongue which does not naturally express her spirit and peculiar bent. In time she may conquer the obstacle, make this tongue her own, force it to express her, but it will be long, if ever, before she can do it with the same richness, force and unfettered individuality as she would have done in her own Gaelic speech. Modern India is another striking example. Nothing has stood more in the way of rapid progress in India, of her finding and developing herself under modern conditions than the long overshadowing of the Indian tongues as cultural instruments by the English language. It is significant that the one sub-nation in India which from the first refused, as much as it could, to undergo this yoke, devoted itself to the development of its language, made that for long its principal preoccupation, gave to it its most original minds and most living energies, getting through everything else perfunctorily, neglecting commerce, doing politics as an intellectual and oratorical pastime,—that it is Bengal which first recovered its soul, respiritualised itself, forced the whole world to hear of its great spiritual personalities, gave it the first modern Indian poet and Indian scientist of world-wide fame and achievement, first made India begin to count again in the culture of the world, first, as a reward in the outer life, arrived at a vital political consciousness and a living political movement not imitative and derivative in its spirit and its central ideal. For so much does language count in the life of a nation ; for so much does it count to the advantage of humanity at large that its group-souls should preserve and develop and use with a vigorous group individuality their natural instrument of expression.

A common language makes for unity; and therefore it might be said that the unity of the human race demands unity of language, and that the advantages of diversity must be foregone for this greater good, however serious the temporary sacrifice. But it makes for a real, fruitful, living

unity, only when it is the natural expression of the race or has been made so by development from within. The history of universal tongues spoken by peoples to whom they were not natural, is not encouraging ; they tend to become dead tongues, sterilising so long as they keep hold, fruitful only when they are broken up again into new derivative languages or have departed leaving the old speech, where that has persisted, to revive with this new stamp and influence upon it. Latin after its first century of general domination in the West became a dead thing, impotent for creation, generated no new culture in the nations speaking it, could not be given a real new life even by so great a force as Christianity. The times during which it was the instrument of European thought, were precisely those in which that thought was heaviest, most traditional and least fruitful. A rapid and vigorous new life only grew up when the languages which appeared out of the detritus of dying Latin or the old languages which had not been lost, took its place as the complete instruments of national culture. For it is not enough that the natural language should be spoken by the people ; it must be the expression of its higher life and thought. A language surviving only as a patois or a provincial tongue like Welsh after the English conquest, Breton or Provençal in France, Czech in Austria or Ruthenian and Lithuanian in Russia languishes, becomes sterile and does not serve all the true purpose of survival.

Language is the sign of the cultural life of a people, its soul in thought and mind standing behind and enriching its soul in action. Therefore it is here that the phenomena and utilities of diversity may be most readily seized ; but these truths are important because they apply equally to the thing it expresses, symbolises and serves as an instrument. Diversity of language is worth keeping because diversity of cultures, of soul-groups is worth keeping, because without that life cannot have full play and

there is a danger, almost an inevitability of decline and stagnation. Thus disappearance into a simple unity, of which the systematic thinker dreams as an ideal and which we have seen to be a substantial possibility and even a likelihood, if a certain tendency becomes dominant, might lead to political peace, economical well-being, perfect administration, the solution of a hundred material problems, as did on a lesser scale the Roman unity ; but to what eventual good if it leads also to the sterilisation of the mind and the stagnation of the soul of humanity ? In laying this stress on culture, on the things of the mind and the spirit, there need be no intention of undervaluing the outward, material side of life, belittling that to which Nature always attaches so insistent an importance. On the contrary, the inner and the outer depend upon each other. We see for instance in the life of a nation that a great period of national culture and vigorous mental and soul life is always part of a general stirring and movement which has its counterpart in the outward political, economical, practical life of the nation. It brings the latter about, but also it itself needs that to flourish with an entirely full and healthy vigour. Therefore the peace, well-being and order of the human world is a thing eminently to be desired as a basis for a great world-culture in which all humanity must be united ; but neither of these unities, the outward or inward, must be devoid of a thing even more important than peace, order and well-being,—freedom and vigour of life, which can only be assured by variation, by group freedom and individual freedom. Not then a uniform unity, not a logically simple, a scientifically rigid, a beautifully neat and mechanical, but a living unity full of healthy freedom and diversity is the ideal which we should keep in view and strive to get realised.

But how is this difficult end to be secured ? For just as an excessive uniformity and centralisation may bring

about the disappearance of necessary variations and indispensable liberties, so a vigorous diversity and individuality may lead to an incurable persistence or constant return of the old separatism which will prevent unity from completing itself or will not allow it to get firm roots. For it will not be enough for the constituent groups or divisions to have a certain formal administrative and legislative separateness like the states of the American union, if as there it is only in mechanical variations that there is liberty and all real departures from the general norm proceeding from an inner variation are discouraged or forbidden. Nor will a unity plus independence of the German type be enough; for there the real fact is a unifying and disciplined Prussianism and independence is only in the form. Nor will even the English colonial system give us any useful suggestion, for although there is there a separate vigour of life, the brain, heart and central spirit are in the metropolitan country and the rest are at the best only outlying posts of the Anglo-Saxon idea. The Swiss cantonal life offers no fruitful similitude, not only on account of its exiguity, but because there the real fact is a single Swiss life and practical spirit with a mental dependence on three foreign cultures sharply dividing the race, so that a common culture does not exist. The problem is rather, on a larger and more difficult scale and with greater complexities, that which offers itself now to the British empire, how to unite Great Britain, Ireland, the Colonies, Egypt, India in a real community, throwing their gains into a common stock, using their energies for a common end, finding the account of their national individuality in a supranational life, yet preserving that individuality, Ireland keeping the Irish soul and life and cultural principle, India the Indian soul and life and cultural principle, the other units developing theirs, not united by a common Anglicisation, which was the past empire-building ideal, but finding a greater, as yet unrealised principle of free union. Nothing

has yet been suggested in the way of solution except some sort of bunch or rather bouquet system, unifying its clusters not by the living stalk of a common origin or united past, for that does not exist, but by an artificial thread of administrative unity which may at any moment be snapped irretrievably by centrifugal forces.

It may be said that after all, unity being the first need, that should be achieved at any cost as national unity was achieved by crushing out the separate existence of the local units and afterwards a new principle of grouping or variation may be found other than that of the nation unit. But the parallel here becomes illusory. For the nation was historically the growth into a larger unit among many units ; the old richness of small units which gave such splendid cultural, but such unsatisfactory political results in Greece, Italy, India was lost indeed, but the same principle of life by diversity was preserved with nations for the diverse units and the cultural life of a continent for the common background. Here nothing of the kind is possible. There will be a sole unity, the world-nation, with no outer source of diversity ; therefore the inner source has to be modified indeed, subordinated in some way, but preserved. It may be that it will not, that the unitarian idea will eventually prevail, turning the nations into geographical departments or provinces ; but in that case the outraged need of life will have its revenge, either by a stagnation, a collapse and a detrition fruitful of new separations, or by some principle of revolt from within, as for example by the principle of Anarchism enforcing itself and breaking down the world-order for a new creation. The question is whether there is not somewhere a principle of unity in diversity by which this method of action and reaction, creation and destruction, realisation and relapse cannot be, if not altogether avoided, yet mitigated in its action and led to a more serene and harmonious working.

The Future Poetry

(1)

It is not often that we see published in India literary criticism which is of the first order, at once discerning and suggestive, criticism which forces us both to see and think. A book which recently I have read and more than once reperused with a yet unexhausted pleasure and fruitfulness, Mr. James Cousins' *New Ways in English Literature*,* is eminently of this kind. It raises thought which goes beyond the strict limits of the author's subject and suggests the whole question of the future of poetry in the age which is coming upon us, the higher functions open to it—as yet very imperfectly fulfilled,—and the part which English literature on the one side and the Indian mind and temperament on the other are likely to take in determining the new trend. The author is himself a poet, a writer of considerable force in the Irish movement which has given contemporary English literature its two greatest poets, and the book on every page attracts and satisfies by its living force of style, its almost perfect measure, its delicacy of touch, its fineness and depth of observation and insight, its just sympathy and appreciation.

* Ganesh and Co. Madras.

For the purpose for which these essays have been, not indeed written, but put together, the criticism, fine and helpful as it is, suffers from one great fault,—there is too little of it. Mr. Cousins is satisfied with giving us the essential, just what is necessary for a trained mind to seize intimately the spirit and manner and poetic quality of the writers whose work he brings before us. This is done sometimes in such a masterly manner that even one touch more might well have been a touch in excess. The essay on Emerson is a masterpiece in this kind ; it gives perfectly in a few pages all that should be said about Emerson's poetry and nothing that need not be said. But some of the essays, admirable in themselves, are too slight for our need. The book is not indeed intended to be exhaustive in its range. Mr. Cousin's wisely takes for the most part,—there is one notable exception,—writers with whom he is in close poetical sympathy or for whom he has a strong appreciation ; certain names which have come over to our ears with some flourish of the trumpets of renown, Thompson, Masefield, Hardy, do not occur at all or only in a passing allusion. But still the book deals among contemporary poets with Tagore, A. E. and Yeats, among recent poets with Stephen Phillips, Meredith, Carpenter, great names all of them, not to speak of lesser writers. This little book with its 135 short pages is almost too small a pedestal for the figures it has to support, not, be it understood, for the purposes of the English reader interested in poetry, but for ours in India who have on this subject a great ignorance and, most of us, a very poorly trained critical intelligence. We need something a little more ample to enchain our attention and fix in us a permanent interest ; a fingerpost by the way is not enough for the Indian reader, you will have to carry him some miles on the road if you would have him follow it.

But Mr. Cousins has done a great service to the Indian mind by giving it at all a chance to follow this direc-

tion with such a guide to point out the way. The English language and literature is practically the only window the Indian mind, with the narrow and meagre and yet burdensome education given to it, possesses into the world of European thought and culture ; but, at least as possessed at present, it is a painfully small and insufficient opening. English poetry for all but a few of us stops short with Tennyson and Browning, when it does not stop with Byron and Shelley. A few have heard of some of the recent, fewer of some of the contemporary poets ; their readers are hardly enough to make a number. In this matter of culture this huge peninsula, once one of the greatest centres of civilisation, has been for long the most provincial of provinces ; it has been a patch of tilled fields round a lawyer's office and a Government cutcherry, a cross between a little district town and the most rural of villages, at its largest a dried-up bank far away from the great stream of the world's living thought and action, visited with no great force by occasional and belated waves, but for the rest a bare field for sluggish activities, the falsest possible education, a knowledge always twenty-five or fifty years behind the time. The awakening brought by the opening years of the twentieth century has chiefly taken the form of a revival of cultural patriotism, highly necessary for a nation which has a distinctive contribution to make to the human spirit in its future development, some new and great thing which it must evolve out of a magnificent past for the opening splendours of the future ; but in order that this may evolve rapidly and surely, it needs a wide and sound information, a richer stuff to work upon, a more vital touch with the life and master tendencies of the world around it. Such books as this will be of invaluable help in creating what is now deficient.

The helpfulness of this suggestive work comes more home to me personally because I have shared to the full the state of mere blank which is the ordinary condition

of the Indian mind with regard to its subject. Such touch as in the intellectual remoteness of India I have been able to keep up with the times, had been with contemporary continental rather than contemporary English literature. With the latter all vital connection came to a dead stop with my departure from England quarter of a century ago ; it had for its last events the discovery of Meredith as a poet, in his *Modern Love*, and the perusal of *Christ in Hades*,—some years before its publication,—the latter an unforgettable date. I had long heard, standing aloof in giant ignorance, the great name of Yeats, but with no more than a fragmentary and mostly indirect acquaintance with some of his work ; A. E. only lives for me in Mr. Cousins' pages ; other poets of the day are still represented in my mind by scattered citations. In the things of culture such a state of ignorance is certainly an unholy state of sin ; but in this immoral and imperfect world even sin has sometimes its rewards, and I get that now in the joy and light of a new world opening to me all in one view while I stand, Cortes-like, on the peak of the large impression created for me by Mr. Cousins' book. For the light we get from a vital and illuminative criticism from within by another mind can sometimes almost take the place of a direct knowledge.

There disengages itself from these essays not so much a special point of view as a distinctive critical and literary temperament, which may be perhaps not so much the whole mind of the critic as the response to his subject in a mind naturally in sympathy with it. Mr. Cousins is a little nervous about this in his preface ; he is apprehensive of being labelled as an idealist. The cut and dried distinction between idealism and realism in literature has always seemed to me to be a little arbitrary and unreal, and whatever its value in drama and fiction, it has no legitimate place in poetry. What we find here is a self-identification with what is best and most characteristic of a

new spirit in the age, a new developing aesthetic temper and outlook,—or should we rather say, inlook? Its mark is a greater (not exclusive) tendency to the spiritual rather than the merely earthly, to the inward and subjective than the outward and objective, to the life within and behind than to the life in front, and in its purest, which seems to be its Irish form, a preference of the lyrical to the dramatic and of the inwardly suggestive to the concrete method of poetical presentation. Every distinctive temperament has naturally the defect of an insufficient sympathy, often a pronounced and intolerant antipathy towards all that departs from its own motives. Moreover contemporary criticism is beset with many dangers; there is the charm of new thought and feeling and expression of tendency which blinds us to the defects and misplaces or misproportions to our view the real merits of the expression itself; there are powerful cross-currents of immediate attraction and repulsion which carry us from the true track; especially, there is the inevitable want of perspective which prevents us from getting a right vision of things too near us in time. And if in addition one is oneself part of a creative movement with powerful tendencies and a pronounced ideal, it becomes difficult to get away from the standpoint it creates to a larger critical outlook. From these reefs and shallows Mr. Cousins' sense of measure and justice of appreciation largely, generally indeed, preserve him, though not, I think, quite invariably. But still it is not a passionless, quite disinterested criticism which we get or want from this book, but a much more helpful thing, an interpretation of work which embodies the creative tendencies of the time by one who has himself lived in them and helped both to direct and to form.

Mr. Cousins' positive criticism is almost always fine, just and inspired by a warm glow of sympathy and understanding tempered by discernment, restraint and measure; whatever the future critic, using his scales and balance, may

have to take away from it, will be, one would imagine, only by way of a slight alteration of stress here and there. His depreciations, though generally sound enough, are not, I think, invariably as just as his appreciations. Thus his essay on the work of J. M. Synge, "the Realist on the Stage," is, in sharp distinction from the rest of the book, an almost entirely negative and destructive criticism, strong and interesting, but written from the point of view of the ideals and aims of the Irish literary movement against a principle of work which seemed entirely to depart from them; yet we are allowed to get some glimpse of a positive side of dramatic power which the critic does not show us, but leaves us rather to guess at. Mr. Cousins seems to me to take the dramatist's theory of his own art more seriously than it should be taken; for the creator can seldom be accepted—there may of course be exceptions, rare instances of clairvoyant self-sight—as a sound exponent of his own creative impulse. He is in his central inspiration the instrument of a light and power not his own, and his account of it is usually vitiated, out of focus, an attempt to explain the workings of this impersonal power by motives which were the contribution of his own personal effort, but which are often quite subordinate or even accidental side-lights of the lower brain-mind, not the central moving force.

Mr. Cousins has pointed out clearly enough that art can never be a copy of life. But it is also, true, I think, that that is not the secret object of most realism, whatever it may say about itself; realism is in fact a sort of nether idealism, or, perhaps more correctly, sometimes an inverse, sometimes a perverse romanticism which tries to get a revelation of creative truth by an effective force of presentation, by an intensity, often an exaggeration at the opposite side of the complex phenomenon of life. All art starts from the sensuous and sensible, or takes it as a continual point of reference or, at the lowest, uses it as a

symbol and a fount of images ; even when it soars into invisible worlds, it is from the earth that it soars ; but equally all art worth the name must go beyond the visible, must reveal, must show us something that is hidden, and in its total effect not reproduce but create. We may say that the artist creates an ideal world of his own, not necessarily in the sense of ideal perfection, but a world that exists in the idea, the imagination and vision of the creator. More truly, he throws into significant form a truth he has seen, which may be truth of hell or truth of heaven or an immediate truth behind things terrestrial or any other, but is never merely the external truth of earth. By that ideative truth and the power, the perfection and the beauty of his presentation and utterance of it, his work must be judged.

Some occasional utterances in this book seem to spring from very pronounced idiosyncracies of its distinctive literary temperament or standpoint and cannot always be accepted without reservation. I do not myself share its rather disparaging attitude towards the dramatic form and motive or its comparative coldness towards the architectural faculty and impulse in poetry. When Mr. Cousins tells us that "its poetry and not its drama will be the thing of life" in Shakespeare's work, I feel that the distinction is not sound all through, that there is a truth behind it, but it is overstated. Or when still more vivaciously he dismisses Shakespeare the dramatist "to a dusty and reverent immortality in the libraries" or speaks of the "monstrous net of his life's work" which but for certain buoys of line and speech "might sink in the ocean of forgetfulness," I cannot help feeling that this can only be at most the mood of the hour born of the effort to get rid of the burden of its past and move more freely towards its future, and not the definitive verdict of the poetic and aesthetic mind on what has been so long the object of its sincere admiration and a powerful presence

and influence. Perhaps I am wrong, I may be too much influenced by my own settled idiosyncracies of an aesthetic temperament and being impregnated with an early cult for the work of the great builders in Sanskrit and Greek, Italian and English poetry. At any rate, this is true that whatever relation we may keep with the great masters of the past, our present business is to go beyond and not to repeat them, and it must always be the lyrical motive and spirit which find a new secret and begin a new creation; for the lyrical is the primary poetical motive and spirit and the dramatic and epic must wait for it to open for them their new heaven and new earth.

I have referred to these points which are only side issues or occasional touches in Mr. Cousins' book, because they are germane to the question which it most strongly raises, the future of English poetry and of the world's poetry. It is still uncertain how that future will deal with the old quarrel between idealism and realism, for the two tendencies these names roughly represent are still present in the tendencies of recent work. More generally, poetry always sways between two opposite trends, towards predominance of subjective vision and towards an emphasis on objective presentation, and it can rise too beyond these to a spiritual plane where the distinction is exceeded, the divergence reconciled. Again, it is not likely that the poetic imagination will ever give up the narrative and dramatic form of its creative impulse; a new spirit in poetry, even though primarily lyrical, is moved always to seize upon and do what it can with them,—as we see in the impulsion which has driven Maeterlinck, Yeats, Robindranath to take hold of the dramatic form for self-expression as well as the lyrical in spite of their dominant subjectivity. We may perhaps think that this was not the proper form for their spirit, that they cannot get there a full or a flawless success; but who shall lay down rules for creative genius or say

what it shall or shall not attempt? It follows its own course and makes its own shaping experiments. And it is interesting to speculate whether the new spirit in poetry will take and use with modifications the old dramatic and narrative forms, as did Robindranath in his earlier dramatic attempts, or quite transform them to its own ends, as he has attempted in his later work. But after all these are subordinate issues.

It will be more fruitful to take the main substance of the matter for which the body of Mr. Cousins' criticism gives a good material. Taking the impression it creates for a starting-point and the trend of English poetry for our main text, but casting our view farther back into the past, we may try to sound what the future has to give us through the medium of the poetic mind and its power for creation and interpretation. The issues of recent activity are still doubtful and it would be rash to make any confident prediction; but there is one possibility which this book strongly suggests and which it is at least interesting and may be fruitful to search and consider. That possibility is the discovery of a closer approximation to what we might call the *mantra* in poetry, that rhythmic speech which, as the Veda puts it, rises at once from the heart of the seer and from the distant home of the Truth,—the discovery of the word, the divine movement, the form of thought proper to the reality which, as Mr. Cousins' excellently says, "lies in the apprehension of a something stable behind the instability of word and deed, something that is a reflection of the fundamental passion of humanity for something beyond itself, something that is a dim foreshadowing of the divine urge which is prompting all creation to unfold itself and to rise out of its limitations towards its Godlike possibilities." Poetry in the past has done that in moments of supreme elevation; in the future there seems to be some chance of its making it a more conscious aim and steadfast endeavour.

A. G.

Sentences from Bhartrihari

IN PRAISE OF VIRTUE

1

Homage to him who keeps his heart a book
For stainless matters, prone others' gifts to prize
And nearness of the good ; whose faithful look
Rejoices in his own dear wife ; whose eyes
Are humble to the Master good and wise ;
A passion high for learning, noble fear
Of public shame who feels ; treasures the still
Sweet love of God ; to self no minister,
But schools that ravener to his lordlier will,
Far from the evil herd on virtue's hill.

2

Eloquence in the assembly ; in the field
The puissant act, the lion's heart ; proud looks
Unshaken in defeat, but modest-kind
Mercy when victory comes ; passionate for books
High love of learning ; thoughts to fame inclined ;—
These things are natural to the noble mind.

3

Being fortunate, how the noble heart grows soft
As lilies ! But in calamity's rude shocks
Rugged and high like a wild mountain's rocks
It fronts the thunders, granite piled aloft.

4

Then is the ear adorned when it inclines
 To wisdom ; giving bracelets rich exceeds ;
So the beneficent heart's deep-stored mines
 Are worked for ore of sweet compassionate deeds,
And with that gold the very body shines.

5

The hand needs not a bracelet for its pride,
 High liberality its greatness is ;
The head no crown wants to show deified,
 Fallen at the Master's feet it best doth please.
Truth-speaking makes the face more bright to shine ;
 Deep musing is the glory of the gaze ;
Strength and not gold in conquering arms divine
 Triumphs ; calm purity the heart arrays.
Nature's great men have these for wealth and gem ;
Riches they need not, nor a diadem.

6

Rare are the hearts that for another's joy
 Fling from them self and hope of their own bliss ;
Himself unhurt for others' good to try
 Man's impulse and his common nature is :
But they who for their poor and selfish aims
Hurt others, are but fiends with human names.
Who hurt their brother men themselves unhelped,
What they are, we know not, nor what horror whelped.

7

Here Vishnu sleeps, here find his foes their rest ;
 The hills have taken refuge, serried lie
Their armies in deep ocean's sheltering breast ;
The clouds of doom are of his heart possessed,
 He harbours nether fire whence he must die.
Cherisher of all in vast equality,
Lo, the wide strong sublime and patient sea !

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th January 1918

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XL

THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTER OF THE IGNORANCE

We know now what is the nature of the knowledge into which we have to grow and what is that human status of partial knowledge which constitutes our share or our nature's characteristic specialisation of the universal ignorance. We should therefore be in a position to define, as far as such a thing can be defined, the nature of the Ignorance itself, its primary functional power and, as we might say, its utility and necessity in the workings of existence. For, in the complete and inalienable self-knowledge of the Brahman, such a phenomenon as the Ignorance cannot have come in as a chance, an intervening accident, an involuntary forgetfulness or confusion, an ugly contretemps for which the All-Wise was not prepared and out of the consequences of which he finds the utmost difficulty in escaping, nor can it be, on the contrary, an inexplicable mystery of his being, original and eternal, of which even he himself, the divine All-teacher, is incapable of giving any account either to himself or to us. It must be a working of the All-Wisdom itself, a power of the All-consciousness which it uses for a primary, an indispensable function in the workings of existence ; there must be something which had to be done because it was worth doing, for which the assumption of Ignorance was a necessary means and utility.

It will be evident from what we have already said so often that the Ignorance is not a creator of absolute unrealities, but only of perversions of reality, not a power for utter illusion, but a power for error born of the limitation of knowledge. The Mayavadin holds the error it creates to be an absolute illusion and world-existence itself to be such an error of the Ignorance ; he gives the figure of the rope mistaken for a snake as the exact nature of the mistake made by the soul when it imposes an absolutely non-existent world upon the sole, the eternally featureless reality which is the Brahman. But this figure destroys itself by a cardinal defect of non-applicability. For in the Mayavadin's position the world is absolutely non-existent, or it exists only in the dream, the error, by the Ignorance—which comes in the end to precisely the same thing ; but the snake in the illustration is not absolutely non-existent, it does exist outside the error made by the mind in its vision. If the rope here is a reality, then the snake also is a reality, though a reality which exists elsewhere and not in the place in which the error of the mental vision has put it. If snake were not as much an existence as rope, if it had not been seen elsewhere as really as the rope here, then the man could not possibly have mistaken the rope for a serpent. The illustration would only light up the truth of the matter for us, if we supposed the world of forms to be real as Brahman is real, but to exist not where the soul sees it, in its present consciousness, in the infinite and universal Being, but elsewhere, in some past consciousness, in some other than the infinite and universal Being. But this would lead to an obvious absurdity.

The illustration and the objection to it are not mere subtleties of a barren logomachy ; they involve a question of solid philosophical importance,—whether the human consciousness is at all capable of mistaking a thing absolutely unreal or non-existent for a reality or even of at

all conceiving of anything as existent which is in all its circumstances utterly non-existent. Nothing in our experience justifies us in attributing to it any such capacity. The consciousness may mistake one reality for another, rope for snake or snake for rope ; it may combine falsely two realities as when it puts wings on the shoulders of a human figure or delineates a woman's form ending in the tail of a fish and calls the one an angel, the other a mermaid. The human imagination works always upon realities or at least upon things of which it has had assurance as realities of its experience, even though it makes of them a false presentation. It may create for itself a god, a devil or a dragon ; but from what does it create them ? We may say that the dragon is a prolongation into the present of a past fact or experience, the huge winged reptiles which were once a reality upon the physical earth, that the God or the devil are realities on another plane of existence, in a more subtle substance of matter, and that the error of the consciousness is to put them in the wrong place or time, present instead of past or future, in the physical skies or on the peaks of the Himalayas or Ida or Olympus, and to figure them in too human forms and with too human attributes. Or if we have no experience of and therefore no faith in these other planes, we must still see that the god and devil are the reality of human beings raised to a higher degree of nature in the consciousness or depressed to a lower by the elimination of defects of power and perfection in the one case or of all modifications and denials of evil in the other and by the attribution of immortality, which is not a creation in the void, but simply an indefinite prolongation of the actual fact of long-continued existence which already belongs to certain forms in the universe.

In no case do we find the consciousness creating its illusions out of unreal, non-existent materials ; it is always with existences, with realities that it deals, although

it may deal with them wrongly, by misapplication, by false combination. Dreams themselves are not a creation of non-existent forms, but an incongruous presentation of images of things which in themselves are real and of which the waking mind has had real experience. We may say that the ignorance misrepresents, makes a false picture of the self-manifestation of the Brahman, or that the world as we see it is a dream, an erroneous image, and that when we wake into knowledge, we shall see the reality by all the elements of the picture being put into their proper place and relation ; but we cannot say that all the elements out of which we have combined the dream, the false picture, are non-existent and the ignorance has created and combined them out of nothing or, what is equally impossible and comes to the same thing, out of a substance of reality which is not only originally one and featureless, but incapable of variation or feature. To do so would be to attribute to mental consciousness just the one capacity which all experience proves that it does not possess.

We then come to the second line of trenches of the illusionist theory when, withdrawing a little from its first absolute position in order to come back to it more firmly, it admits that forms and a world of forms may have a certain subordinate and temporal reality ; but the only eternal reality is Brahman and therefore the other, not being eternal, is in highest truth an illusion. It gives here the example of the earth and the pot ; the earth is the substance, the reality, because it is permanent, but the pot is the form, the phenomenon, the apparent reality, and in final truth unreal, because it is impermanent : for everything that has a beginning and an end, shows by the very fact of ending that it never had a real existence. Again, both the illustration and the conclusion it illustrates fail when they are rigorously tested. It is true that forms begin and end, but it is also true that they have

no real end, because they have obviously a potentiality of perpetual recurrence ; they may not be eternal in constant perpetuity, but they may and seem to be eternal in recurrent perpetuity. A particular pot-form is brought out of earth and dissolved, but the general form of pot with its infinite power of self-variation is a thing which will last as long as the earth-substance lasts ; it represents the power of form eternally inherent in substance ; it is there latent, subconsciously powerful to exist even when it does not exist outwardly, unmanifestly existent in the true sense of existence even when not active in manifest being. So must it be with the world and the Brahman. Although particular world-forms may appear and disappear,—we cannot say that they will not again recur,—there is nothing to show that world in itself ever comes to an end or that there was before, or will be hereafter, any space of time during which not at all in infinite Brahman did anything of the nature of universe exist. Even if we suppose this, still it was there latent, had been before and must be again. But if world is without any real beginning or any real end, then it too is eternal and cannot be said to be, in this sense either, a non-existence, an illusion, an unreality.

Resiling a step back from this position we may say that this does not matter, since the individual soul can merge itself into the Brahman and lose all-consciousness of world-being and this is a sufficient proof that there is, highest above all, the eternal Brahman to whom world has no existence ; because he is self-existence alone and unqualified. But here too several qualifications have to be made. First, this status of the soul is arrived at in a trance of consciousness from which world-existence is excluded, but which can and does return out of itself into world-existence ; therefore unconsciousness of world-being, *sushupti*, a sleep without waking, cannot be the whole eternal nature of Brahman-consciousness. Secondly,

we see that this loss of world-being is confined to the individual soul, the Jivatman, and though it is held that the Jivatman and the Brahman are one without difference or distinction, yet the retirement of the Jivatman does not bring about the cessation of world, does not even affect its unchanged persistence. Either then the world exists eternally as the sum of a plurality of souls and there are two selves, the one spirit eternally unconscious of world-being, into which the Jivatman retires, and the plural soul perpetually conscious of it; or else Brahman itself has perpetually two coexistent conditions, one of sleep, the other of waking, one in which he is eternally conscious of the truth of immutable unity, another in which he is perpetually subject to the illusion of variable multiplicity; and he has the power in any individual soul of returning eternally and without relapse to the truth, the higher state, but in the total plurality he can only draw back to it for a time, but must always relapse into the illusion. But how can this eternal duality be possible unless Brahman in himself, in his highest truth of being is not limited by either oneness or multiplicity, immutability or variation, but is something beyond which is simultaneously conscious of both conditions,—as behind the oneness of earth and the multiplicity of forms of earth there is a being and a power of being which in its indeterminate oneness takes the appearance of earth, in its determinate multiplicity the appearance of many earth-forms? The highest state of the liberated soul would be then identification with this highest consciousness of Brahman which is eternally aware of both its status of unity and its status of multiplicity, but limited by neither. Then, either an exclusive consciousness of oneness empty of world or an exclusive consciousness of plural world-being would be, as the Upanishad affirms, a state of ignorance, and the simultaneous possession of both in a consciousness higher than either would be the truth

and the highest status.

We might say that still world-being is an illusion and the exclusion of it is not indeed the absolute truth, but that by which we enter into the truth ; the one is Avidya, the other Vidya ; the Brahman possesses eternally both, but is conscious of world-being only as an illusion and of unity as a return from the illusion, and this change or return is reflected in the liberation of the individual Jivatman. We might say too that if the mental consciousness cannot create except out of pre-existent realities, the highest consciousness of Brahman can so create by a sort of omnipotent power of imagination in that consciousness. This imagination is an image-builder, a maker of forms, and all forms are figments of this supreme imaginative consciousness. But forms and images cannot be created except out of some substance, and if the substance is real, the forms also are real. It may be said that the images of dream, delirium, hallucination are absolutely unreal, forms without true substance, illusions ; and the world is such a dream, delirium or self-hallucination of the Brahman. But this is an error ; for the images of dream, delirium, hallucination are forms of substance, however subtle or fleeting or illusory they may seem to the physical mind. For matter is not the only power of substance. There is substance of mind as well as substance of matter, subtle substance as well as gross substance. Mind is not an illusion but a reality, a power of being, and forms of mind are on their own plane substantial forms of being. All forms in fact must be forms of being, and world-forms can only be forms of the one Being, Brahman, forms of the Real and therefore real in their substance. Figments of consciousness they may be, but consciousness does not mould them out of nothing, but out of the being of Brahman.

We may say that world-forms are only reflections of the reality, not true forms but shadows. But, in the

first place, they must correspond to some truth of that which they reflect ; they are not denials of that truth or things whose appearances have no connection of any kind with its reality, or mere veils which simply serve to conceal it from us. Nor are they only its symbols, its signs of manifestation, but its embodiments. For they are not shadowy reflections, like an image in a glass or in a pool where the reflecting substance is remote from and other than the thing reflected ; here Brahman the being is reflected in himself, in Brahman the consciousness. Not only so, but while the shadow in the glass or the pool does not contain ourselves, our being, our life, our consciousness, world-forms do contain the being, the consciousness, the power of Brahman, they live with his life. Not only is Brahman conscious of them as we are of our shadow in glass or pool, but he is conscious in them and all around them, and they by that are conscious in him. Therefore all the images and analogies by which we try to get away from the reality of Brahman in the world and condemn it as a dream, shadow, reflection, hallucination, mere form, false imposition of the senses, break down when examined, prove to be themselves false in their imperfection, in their inability to represent to us the real facts of Being or even properly to illustrate or throw a light on them. Brahman meets us everywhere to convince us of his omnipresent as well as his remote reality, of the truth of his objective as well as his subjective self-manifestation. We find that he is not only in and around, but verily has become all these existences.

It is in the light of this great fact of Being and of all the facts that devolve from it, it is largely, comprehensively, not by trenchant intellectual subtleties, that we shall best understand the primary nature and general utility of the Ignorance. Being is the first great reality ; Consciousness is the second, Being working upon itself as a Will or self-aware force to liberate into activity its

own truths and powers and throw them into forms by which they can be embodied and work out their potential relations. Ignorance enters in as a secondary power of this conscious Force, for limitation, for division. The Upanishad perceived this when it designed the small, *alpau*, as the field of the results of the ignorance and the large, *bhūman*, as the field of the joy of knowledge, and pointed out *bheda*, division, breaking up the all-uniting oneness, as the characteristic action. All ignorance indeed comes by limitation of Knowledge, by division of consciousness. When we look upon the outside of things, we limit ourselves to that external knowledge which is by itself an ignorance ; as when we look at water and know it only as a mobile and liquid substance, until by an enlargement of knowledge out of this limitation we come to know that it is compounded oxygen and hydrogen,—but we do not therefore conclude that water is an illusion, that there is no mobile liquid substance at all and only hydrogen and oxygen exist ; for that would be a fresh limitation, a reverse ignorance. When again we regard ourselves as a separate mind and body, we fall into ignorance by a limitation of self-knowledge which takes the form of a division of consciousness, *bheda*. Enlarging our knowledge out of this limitation we come to know that there is one Mind, one Matter, and our mind and body can never be separable from it, that they are one mind and matter with all other bodies and intelligences. But to see only that one and ignore our individual action mental and physical and the modification that it brings into the universal action, would be again another limitation of knowledge, a reverse ignorance. So too we divide mind and matter and regard them as separate entities, but by enlargement out of this ignorance we see the one being and force of which they are complementary activities ; we come to the One by knowing which all is known,—even as by understanding the nature and action of the one Mind

or the one Force we can know the nature and action of all minds and all forces. But if we see this One only and put out of sight the multiplicity of its forms and activities, we fall, here too, into a limitation of knowledge from the other side, a new division, a reverse ignorance. The One is known through and in the Many, the Many are known by and in the One.

Everywhere this limitation and division reveal themselves as the whole condition of the ignorance ; by enlargement is release into knowledge and into our true being, by comprehensive unity, by the gathering up of infinite realities into the one reality on which they all depend for their truth. Our knowledge of our waking selves is an ignorant limitation, a division from the rest of our being, which we heal by awaking to that rest, to the subconscious and superconscious self, without thereby losing the power to live in the waking world. Our separative ego-sense is an ignorant limitation by which we divide ourselves from God and our innumerable other selves so as to live shut up in the prison of our little personality, and we heal it by awaking to the divine consciousness and the universal consciousness in all beings, but without thereby forfeiting our power to develop in this universality and self-transcendence an individual point and current of thought and action. Our preoccupation with each moment of time and with the little sum of moments of time which make up our present life, is an ignorant limitation by which we divide ourselves from our infinite past and future being without which the present would be impossible, futile, meaningless, purposeless, and we heal it by recovery of our past and our future on the background of our timeless being : so we live from and in our real being, but do not thereby recoil from existence in time or from life in the present, but make it rather more powerful, luminous and effective. So it is with every form of ignorance ; the secret

of each is limitation of consciousness, division of consciousness ; that is the Ignorance, its primary fact and constituting nature.

But how is this limitation and division brought about in the indivisible unity of the Infinite ? We shall see that the secret lies in the power of the force of consciousness, Tapas, by which the world was created and its action is conducted, to dwell in its activity and put back from it all that is not immediately concerned with that activity. And its object is variety of dealings with infinite relations (*vyavahâra*), so that by limitation may be produced certain results, a certain play of potentialities which would not be freely operative in the unrestricted light of the illimitable self-conscious existence. Limitation and division are not absolutely real in the Brahman, they are a device for certain purposes of action and relation, *vyavahârîka* ; they operate, that is to say, not in the integral Brahman consciousness, but in that movement of it only which is absorbed in particular action and relation. They are the play of the actor, not the full reality of the being.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SAMADHI

Intimately connected with the aim of the Yoga of Knowledge which must always be the growth, the ascent or the withdrawal into a higher or a divine consciousness not now normal to us, is the importance attached to the phenomenon of Yogic trance, to Samadhi. It is supposed that there are states of being which can only be gained in trance; that especially is to be desired in which all action of awareness is abolished and there is no consciousness at all except the pure supramental immersion in immobile, timeless and infinite being. By passing away in this trance the soul departs into the silence of the highest Nirvana without possibility of return into any illusory or inferior state of existence. Samadhi is not so all-important in the Yoga of devotion, but it still has its place there as the swoon of being into which the ecstasy of divine love casts the soul. To enter into it is the supreme step of the ladder of Yogic practice in Rajayoga and Hathayoga. What then is the nature of Samadhi or the utility of its trance in an integral Yoga? It is evident that where our objective includes the possession of the Divine in life, a state of cessation of life cannot be the last consummating step or the highest desirable condition: Yogic trance cannot be an aim, as in so many Yogic systems,

but only a means, and a means not of escape from the waking existence, but to enlarge and raise the whole seeing, living and active consciousness.

The importance of Samadhi rests upon the truth which modern knowledge is rediscovering, but which has never been lost in Indian psychology, that only a small part whether of world-being or of our own being comes into our ken or into our action. The rest is hidden behind in subliminal reaches of being which descend into the profoundest depths of the subconscious and rise to highest peaks of superconscience, or which surround the little field of our waking self with a wide circumconscient existence of which our mind and sense catch only a few indications. The old Indian psychology expressed this fact by dividing consciousness into three provinces, waking state, dream-state, sleep-state, *jāgrat*, *svapna*, *sushupti*; and it supposed in the human being a waking self, a dream-self, a sleep-self, with the supreme or absolute self of being, the fourth or Turiya, beyond, of which all these are derivations for the enjoyment of relative experience in the world.

If we examine the phraseology of the old books, we shall find that the waking state is the consciousness of the material universe which we normally possess in this embodied existence dominated by the physical mind; the dream state is a consciousness corresponding to the subtler life-plane and mind-plane behind, which to us, even when we get intimations of them, have not the same concrete reality as the things of the physical existence; the sleep-state is a consciousness corresponding to the supramental plane proper to the gnosis, which is beyond our experience because our causal body or envelope of gnosis is not developed in us, its faculties not active, and therefore we are in relation to that plane in a condition of dreamless sleep. The Turiya beyond is the consciousness of our pure self-existence or our absolute being with which

we have no direct relations at all, whatever mental reflections we may receive in our dream or our waking or even, irrecoverably, in our sleep consciousness. This fourfold scale corresponds to the degrees of the ladder of being by which we climb back towards the absolute Divine. Normally therefore we cannot get back from the physical mind to the higher planes or degrees of consciousness without receding from the waking state, without going in away from it and losing touch with the material world. Hence to those who desire to have the experience of these higher degrees, trance becomes a desirable thing, a means of escape from the limitations of the physical mind.

Samadhi or Yogic trance retires to increasing depths according as it draws farther and farther away from the normal or waking state and enters into degrees of consciousness less and less communicable to the waking mind, less and less ready to receive a summons from the waking world. Beyond a certain point the trance becomes complete and it is then almost or quite impossible to awaken or call back the soul that has receded into them ; it can only come back by its own will or at most by a violent shock of physical appeal dangerous to the system owing to the abrupt upheaval of return. There are said to be supreme states of trance in which the soul persisting for too long a time cannot return ; for it loses its hold on the cord which binds it to the consciousness of life, and the body is left, maintained indeed in its set position, not dead by dissolution, but incapable of recovering the ensouled life which had inhabited it. Finally, the Yogin acquires at a certain stage of development the power of abandoning his body definitively without the ordinary phenomena of death, by an act of will,* or by a process of withdrawing the pranic life-force through the gate of the upward life-current (*udâna*), opening for it

a way through the mystic *brahmarandhra* in the head. By departure from life in the state of Samadhi he attains directly to that higher status of being to which he aspires.

In the dream-state itself there are an infinite series of depths; from the lighter recall is easy and the world of the physical senses is at the doors, though for the moment shut out; in the deeper it becomes remote and less able to break in upon the inner absorption, the mind has entered into secure depths of trance. There is a complete difference between Samadhi and normal sleep, between the dream state of Yoga and the physical state of dream. The latter belongs to the physical mind; in the former the mind proper and subtle is at work liberated from the immixture of the physical mentality. The dreams of the physical mind are an incoherent jumble made up partly of responses to vague touches from the physical world round which the lower mind-faculties disconnected from the will and reason, the *buddhi*, weave a web of wandering phantasy, partly of disordered associations from the brain-memory, partly of reflections from the soul travelling on the mental plane, reflections which are, ordinarily, received without intelligence or coordination, wildly distorted in the reception and mixed up confusedly with the other dream elements, with brain-memories and fantastic responses to any sensory touch from the physical world. In the Yogic dream-state, on the other hand, the mind is in clear possession of itself, though not of the physical world, works coherently and is able to use either its ordinary will and intelligence with a concentrated power or else the higher will and intelligence of the more exalted planes of mind. It withdraws from experience of the outer world, it puts its seals upon the physical senses and their doors of communication with material things; but everything that is proper to itself, thought, reasoning, reflection, vision, it can continue to execute with an increased purity and power of sovereign concentration

free from the distractions and unsteadiness of the waking mind. It can use too its will and produce upon itself or upon its environment mental, moral and even physical effects which will continue and have their after consequences on the waking state subsequent to the cessation of the trance.

To arrive at full possession of the powers of the dream-state, it is necessary first to exclude the attack of the sights, sounds etc. of the outer world upon the physical organs. It is quite possible indeed to be aware in the dream-trance of the outer physical world through the subtle senses which belong to the subtle body ; one may be aware of them just so far as one chooses and on a much wider scale than in the waking condition ; for the subtle senses have a far more powerful range than the gross physical organs, a range which may be made practically unlimited. But this awareness of the physical world through the subtle senses is something quite different from our normal awareness of it through the physical organs ; the latter is incompatible with the settled state of trance, for the pressure of the physical senses breaks the Samadhi and calls back the mind to live in their normal field where alone they have power. But the subtle senses have power both upon their own planes and upon the physical world, though this is to them more remote than their own world of being. In Yoga various devices are used to seal up the doors of the physical sense, some of them physical devices ; but the one all-sufficient means is a force of concentration by which the mind is drawn inward to depths where the call of physical things can no longer easily attain to it. A second necessity is to get rid of the intervention of physical sleep. The ordinary habit of the mind when it goes in away from contact with physical things is to fall into the torpor of sleep or its dreams, and therefore when called in for the purposes of Samadhi, it gives or tends to give, at the first chance, by sheer force

of habit, not the response demanded, but its usual response of physical slumber. This habit of the mind has to be got rid of ; the mind has to learn to be awake in the dream state, in possession of itself, not with the outgoing, but with an ingathered wakefulness in which, though immersed in itself, it exercises all its powers.

The experiences of the dream-state are infinitely various. For not only has it sovereign possession of the usual mental powers, reasoning, discrimination, will, imagination, and can use them in whatever way, on whatever subject, for whatever purpose it pleases, but it is able to establish connection with all the worlds to which it has natural access or to which it chooses to acquire access, from the physical to the higher mental worlds. This it does by various means open to the subtlety, flexibility and comprehensive movement of this internalised mind liberated from the narrow limitations of the physical outward-going senses. It is able first to take cognizance of all things whether in the material world or upon other planes by aid of perceptible images, not only images of things visible, but of sounds, touch, smell, taste, movement, action, of all that makes itself sensible to the mind and its organs. For the mind in Samadhi has access to the inner space called sometimes the *chidakasha*, to depths of more and more subtle ether which are heavily curtained from the physical sense by the grosser ether of the material universe, and all things sensible, whether in the material world or any other, create reconstituting vibrations, sensible echoes, reproductions, recurrent images of themselves which that subtler ether receives and retains.

It is this which explains many of the phenomena of clairvoyance, clair-audience, etc ; for these phenomena are only the exceptional admission of the waking mentality into a limited sensitiveness to what might be called the image memory of the subtle ether, by which not only the signs of all things past and present, but even those of

things future can be seized ; for things future are already accomplished to knowledge and vision on higher planes of mind and their images can be reflected upon mind in the present. But these things which are exceptional to the waking mentality, difficult and to be perceived only by the possession of a special power or else after assiduous training, are natural to the dream-state of trance consciousness in which the subliminal mind is free. And that mind can also take cognizance of things on various planes not only by these sensible images, but by a species of thought perception or of thought reception and impression analogous to that phenomenon of consciousness which in modern psychical science has been given the name of telepathy. But the powers of the dream mind do not end here. It can by a sort of projection of itself, in a subtle form of its mental body, actually enter into other planes and worlds or into distant places and scenes of this world, move among them with a sort of bodily presence and bring back the direct experience of their scenes and truths and occurrences. It may even project actually the mental body for the same purpose and travel in it, leaving the physical body in a profoundest trance without sign of life until its return.

The greatest value of the dream-state of Samadhi lies, however, not in these more outward things, but in its power to open up easily higher ranges and powers of thought, emotion, will by which the soul grows in height, range and self-mastery. Especially, withdrawing from the distraction of sensible things, it can, in a perfect power of concentrated self-seclusion, prepare itself by a free reasoning, thought, discrimination and, finally, mental vision and identification for access to the Divine, the supreme Self, the transcendent Truth, not only in its principles and powers but in its pure and highest Being. Or it can by an absorbed inner joy and emotion, as in a sealed and secluded chamber of the soul, prepare itself

for the delight of union with the divine Beloved, the Master of all bliss.

For the integral Yoga this method of Samadhi may seem to have the disadvantage that when it ceases, the thread is broken and the soul returns into the distraction and imperfection of the outward life, with only such an elevating effect upon that outer life as the general memory of these deeper experiences may produce. But this gulf, this break is not inevitable. In the first place, it is only in the untrained psychic being that the experiences of the trance are a blank to the waking mind ; as it becomes the master of its Samadhi, it is able to pass without any gulf of oblivion from the inner to the outer waking. Secondly, when this has been once done, what is attained in the inner state, becomes easier to acquire by the waking consciousness and to turn into the normal experience, powers, mental status of the waking life. The subtle mind which is normally eclipsed by the insistence of the physical being, becomes powerful even in the waking state, until even there the enlarging man is able to live in his subtle as well as his physical body, to be aware of it and in it, to use its senses, faculties, powers, to dwell in possession of supraphysical truth, consciousness and experience.

The sleep-state ascends to a higher power of being, beyond thought into pure consciousness, beyond emotion into pure bliss, beyond will into pure mastery ; it is the gate of union with the supreme state of Sachchidananda out of which all the activities of the world are born. But here we must take care to avoid the pitfalls of symbolic language. The use of the words dream and sleep for these higher states is nothing but an image drawn from the experience of the normal physical mind with regard to planes in which it is not at home. It is not the truth that the Self in the third status called perfect sleep, *sushupti*, is in a state of slumber. The sleep self is on the contrary

described as Prajna, the Master of Wisdom and Knowledge, Self of the Gnosis, and as Ishwara, the Lord of being. To the physical mind a sleep, it is to our wider and subtler consciousness a greater waking. To the normal mind all that exceeds its normal experience but still comes into its scope, seems a dream; but at the point where it borders on things quite beyond its scope, it can no longer see truth even as in a dream, but passes into the blank incomprehension and non-reception of slumber. This border-line varies with the power of the individual mind, with the degree and height of its enlightenment and awakening. The line may be pushed up higher and higher until it may pass even beyond the mind. Normally indeed the human mind cannot be awake even with the inner waking of trance on the supramental levels; but this disability can be overcome. Awake on these levels the soul becomes master of the ranges of gnostic thought, gnostic will, gnostic delight, and if it can do this in Samadhi, it may carry its memory of experience and its power of experience over into the waking state. Even on the yet higher level open to us, that of the Ananda, the awakened soul may become similarly possessed of the Bliss Self both in its concentration and in its cosmic comprehension. But still there may be ranges above from which it can bring back no memory except that which says, "somehow, indescribably, I was in bliss," the bliss of an unconditioned existence beyond all potentiality of expression by thought or description by image or feature. Even the sense of being may disappear in an experience in which the word existence loses its sense and the Buddhist symbol of Nirvana seems alone and sovereignly justified. However high the power of awakening goes, there seems to be a beyond in which the image of sleep, of *sushupti*, will still find its application.

Such is the principle of the Yogic trance, Samadhi,—into its complex phenomena we need not now enter. It

is sufficient to note its double utility in the integral Yoga. It is true that up a point difficult to define or delimit almost all that Samadhi can give, can be acquired without recourse to Samadhi. But still there are certain heights of spiritual experience of which the direct as opposed to a reflecting experience can only be acquired deeply and in its fullness by means of the Yogic trance. And even for that which can be otherwise acquired, it offers a ready means, a facility which becomes more helpful, if not indispensable, the higher and more difficult of access become the planes on which the heightened spiritual experience is sought. Once attained there, it has to be brought as much as possible into the waking consciousness. For in a Yoga which embraces all life completely and without reserve, the full use of Samadhi comes only when its gains can be made the normal possession and experience for an integral waking of the embodied soul in the human being.

Essays on the Gita

THE DIVINE WORKER

To attain to the divine birth,—a divinising new birth of the soul into a higher consciousness,—and to do divine works both as a means towards that before it is attained and as an expression of it after it is attained, is then the Karmayoga of the Gita. The Gita does not try to define works by any outward signs through which it can be recognisable to an external gaze, measurable by the criticism of the world ; it deliberately renounces even the ordinary ethical distinctions by which men seek to guide themselves in the light of the human reason. The signs by which it distinguishes divine works are all profoundly intimate and subjective ; the stamp by which they are known is invisible, spiritual, supra-ethical.

They are recognizable only by the light of the soul from which they come. For, it says “ what is action and what is inaction, as to this even the sages are perplexed and deluded,” because judging by practical, social, ethical, intellectual standards, they discriminate by accidentals and do not go to the root of the matter ; “ I will declare to thee that action by the knowledge of which thou shalt be released from all ills. One has to understand about action as well as to understand about wrong action and

about inaction one has to understand ; thick and tangled is the way of works." Action in the world is like a deep forest, *galana*, through which man goes stumbling as best he can, by the light of the ideas of his time, the standards of his personality, his environment, or rather of many times, many personalities, layers of thoughts and ethics from many social stages all inextricably confused together, temporal and conventional amidst all their claim to absoluteness and immutable truth, empirical and irrational in spite of their aping of right reason. And finally the sage seeking in the midst of it all a highest foundation of fixed law and an original truth finds himself obliged to raise the last supreme question, whether all action and life itself are not a delusion and a snare and whether cessation from action, *akarma*, is not the last resort of the tired and disillusioned human soul. But, says Krishna, in this matter even the sages are perplexed and deluded. For by action, by works, not by inaction comes the knowledge and the release.

What then is the solution ? what is that type of works by which we shall be released from the ills of life, from this doubt, this error, this grief, from this mixed, impure and baffling result even of our purest and best-intentioned acts, from these million forms of evil and suffering ? No outward distinctions need be made, is the reply ; no work the world needs, be shunned ; no limit or hedge set round our human activities ; on the contrary, all actions should be done, but from a soul in Yoga with the Divine, *yuktah kritsua-karma-krit*. *Akarma*, cessation from action is not the way ; the man who has attained to the insight of the highest reason, perceives that such inaction is itself a constant action, a state subject to the workings of Nature and her qualities. The mind that takes refuge in physical inactivity, is still under the delusion that it and not Nature is the doer of works ; it has mistaken inertia for liberation ; it does not see that even

in what seems absolute inertia greater than that of the stone or clod, Nature is at work, keeps unimpaired her hold. On the contrary in the full flood of action the soul is free from its works, is not the doer nor bound by what is done, and he who lives in the freedom of the soul, not in the bondage of the modes of Nature, alone has release from works. This is what the Gita clearly means when it says that he who in action can see inaction and can see action still continuing in cessation from works, is the man of true reason and discernment among men. This saying hinges upon the Sankhya distinction between Purusha and Prakriti, between the free inactive soul, eternally calm, pure and unmoved in the midst of works, and ever active Nature operative as much in inertia and cessation as in the overt turmoil of her visible hurry of labour. This is the knowledge which the highest effort of the discriminating reason, the *buddhi*, gives to us, and therefore whoever possesses it, is the truly rational and discerning man, *sa buddhimān manushyeshu*,—not the perplexed thinker who judges life and works by the external, uncertain and impermanent distinctions of the lower reason. Therefore the liberated man is not afraid of action, he is a large and universal doer of all works, *kr'itsnakarmakr'it*; not as others do them in subjection to Nature, but poised in the silent calm of the soul, tranquilly in Yoga with the Divine. The Divine is the lord of his works, he is only their channel through the instrumentality of his nature conscious of and subject to her Lord. By the flaming intensity and purity of this knowledge all his works are burned up as in a fire and his mind remains without any stain or disfiguring mark from them, calm, silent, unperturbed, white and clean and pure. To do all in this liberating knowledge, without the personal egoism of the doer, is the first sign of the divine worker.

The second sign is freedom from desire ; for where

there is not the personal egoism of the doer, desire becomes impossible ; it is starved out, sinks for want of a support, dies of inanition. Outwardly the liberated man seems to undertake works of all kinds like other men, on a larger scale perhaps, with a more powerful will and driving-force, for the might of the divine will works in his active nature ; but from all his inceptions and undertakings the inferior concept and nether will of desire is entirely banished, *sarve samârambhâh kâmâsankalpa-varjitâh*. He has abandoned all attachment to the fruits of his works, and where one does not work for the fruit, but solely as an impersonal instrument of the Master of works, desire can find no place,—not even the desire to serve successfully, for the fruit is the Lord's and determined by him and not by the personal will and effort, or to serve with credit and to the Master's satisfaction, for the real doer is the Lord himself and all glory belongs to a form of his Shakti missioned in the nature and not to the limited human personality. The human mind and soul of the liberated man does nothing, *na kinchil karoti* ; even though through his nature he engages in action, it is the Nature, the executive Shakti, it is the conscious Godless governed by the divine Inhabitant who does the work.

It does not follow that the work is not to be done perfectly, with success, with a right adaptation of means to ends : on the contrary a perfect working is easier to action done tranquilly in Yoga than to action done in the blindness of hopes and fears, lamed by the judgments of the stumbling reason, running about amidst the eager trepidations of the hasty human will : Yoga, says the Gita elsewhere, is the true skill in works, *yogah karmasu kauçalam*. But all this is done impersonally by the action of a great universal light and power operating through the individual nature. The Karmayogin knows that the power given to him will be adapted to the fruit decreed, the divine thought behind the work equated with the

work he has to do, the will in him—which will not be wish or desire, but an impersonal drive of conscious power directed towards an aim not his own,—subtly regulated in its energy and direction by the divine wisdom. The result may be success, as the ordinary mind understands it, or it may seem to that mind to be defeat and failure ; but to him it is always the success intended, not by him, but by the all-wise manipulator of action and result, because he does not seek for victory, but only for the fulfilment of the divine will and wisdom which works out its ends through apparent failure as well as and often with greater force than through apparent triumph. Arjuna, bidden to fight, is assured of victory ; but even if certain defeat were before him, he must still fight because that is the present work assigned to him as his immediate share in the great sum of energies by which the divine will is surely accomplished.

The liberated man has no personal hopes ; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions ; he receives what the divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none : what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment ; what goes from him, he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control ; free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things. His action is indeed a purely physical action, *câritram kevalam karma* ; for all else comes from above, is only a reflection of the will, knowledge, joy of the divine Purushottama. Therefore he does not by a stress on doing and its objects bring about in his mind and heart any of those reactions which we call passion and sin. For sin consists not in the outward deed, but in an impure reaction of the personal will, mind and heart ; the impersonal, the spiritual is always pure, *apâpaviddham*, and gives to all that it does its own inalienable purity.

This spiritual impersonality is a third sign of the divine worker. All human souls, indeed, who have attained to a certain greatness and largeness are conscious of an impersonal Force or Love or Will and Knowledge working through them, but they are not free from egoistic reactions, sometimes violent enough, of their human personality. But this freedom the liberated soul has attained; for he has cast his personality into the impersonal where it is taken up by the divine Person, the Purushottama, he who uses all qualities and is bound by none. He has become a soul and ceased to be a sum of natural qualities; and such appearance of personality as remains for the operations of Nature, is something unbound, large, flexible, universal; it is a free mould for the Infinite, it is a living mask of the Purushottama.

The result of this desirelessness and impersonality is a perfect equality in the soul and the nature. Equality is the fourth sign of the divine worker. He has, says the Gita, passed beyond the dualities; he is *dvandvâtita*. We have seen that he regards with equal eyes, without any disturbance of feeling, failure and success, victory and defeat; but not only these, all dualities are in him surpassed and reconciled. The outward distinctions by which men determine their psychological attitude towards the happenings of the world, have for him only a subordinate and instrumental meaning. He does not ignore them, but he is above them. Good happening and evil happening, so all-important to the human soul subject to desire, are to the desireless divine soul equally welcome since by their mingled strand are worked out the developing forms of the eternal good. He cannot be defeated, since all for him is moving towards the divine victory in the Kurukshetra of Nature, *dharmakshetre kurukshetre*, the field of doings which is the field of the evolving Dharma, and every turn of the conflict has been designed and mapped by the foreseeing eye of the Master of the

battle, the Lord of works and Guide of the dharma. Honour and dishonour from men cannot move him, nor their praise nor their blame; for he has a greater clear-seeing judge and another standard for his action, and his motive admits no dependence upon worldly rewards. Arjuna the Kshatriya prizes naturally honour and reputation and is right in shunning disgrace and the name of coward as worse than death; for to maintain the point of honour and the standard of courage in the world is part of his dharma: but Arjuna the liberated soul need care for none of these things; he has only to know the *kartavyam karma*, the work which the supreme Self demands from him, and to do that and leave the result to the Lord of his actions. He has passed even beyond that distinction of sin and virtue which is so all-important to the human soul while it is struggling to minimise the hold of its egoism and lighten the heavy and violent yoke of its passions,—the liberated has risen above these struggles and is seated firmly in the purity of the witnessing and enlightened soul. Sin has fallen away from him, and not a virtue acquired and increased by good action and impaired or lost by evil action, but the inalienable and unalterable purity of a divine and selfless nature is the peak to which he has climbed and the seat upon which he is founded. There the sense of sin and the sense of virtue have no starting-point or applicability.

Arjuna, still in the ignorance, may feel in his heart the call of right and justice and may argue in his mind that abstention from battle would be a sin entailing responsibility for all the suffering that injustice and oppression and the evil karma of the triumph of wrong bring upon men and nations, or he may feel in his heart the recoil from violence and slaughter and argue in his mind that all shedding of blood is a sin which nothing can justify. Both of these attitudes would appeal with equal right to virtue and reason and it would depend upon the man, the

circumstances and the time which of these might prevail in his mind or before the eyes of the world. Or he might simply feel constrained by his heart and his honour to support his friends against his enemies, the cause of the good and just against the cause of the evil and oppressive. The liberated soul looks beyond these conflicting standards ; he sees simply what the supreme Self demands from him as needful for the maintenance or for the bringing forward of the evolving Dharma. He has no personal ends to serve, no personal loves and hatreds to satisfy, no rigidly fixed standard of action which opposes its rock-line to the flexible advancing march of the progress of the human race or stands up defiant against the call of the Infinite. He has no personal enemies to be conquered or slain, but sees only men who have been brought up against him by circumstances and the will in things to help by their opposition the march of destiny. Against them he can have no wrath or hatred ; for wrath and hatred are foreign to the divine nature. The Asura's desire to break and slay what opposes him, the Rakshasa's grim lust of slaughter are impossible to his calm and peace and his all-embracing sympathy and understanding. He has no wish to injure, but on the contrary a universal friendliness and compassion, *maitrah karuna eva cha* ; but this compassion is that of a divine soul overlooking men, embracing all other souls in himself, not the shrinking of the heart and the nerves and the flesh which is the ordinary human form of pity ; nor does he attach a supreme importance to the life of the body, but looks beyond to the life of the soul and attaches to the other only an instrumental value. He will not hasten to slaughter and strife, but if war comes in the wave of the Dharma, he will accept it with a large equality and a perfect understanding and sympathy for those whose power and pleasure of domination he has to break and whose joy of triumphant life he has to destroy.

For in all he sees two things, the Divine inhabiting every being equally, the varying manifestation unequal only in its temporary circumstances. In the animal and man, in the dog, the unclean outcast and the learned and virtuous Brahmin, in the saint and the sinner, in the indifferent and the friendly and the hostile, in those who love him and benefit and those who hate him and afflict, he sees himself, he sees God and has at heart for all the same equal kindness, the same divine affection. Circumstances may determine the outward clasp or the outward conflict, but can never affect his equal eye, his open heart, his inner embrace of all. And in all his actions there will be the same principle of soul, a perfect equality, and the same principle of work, the will of the Divine in him active for the need of the race in its gradually developing advance towards the Godhead.

Again, the sign of the divine worker is that which is central to the divine consciousness itself, a perfect inner joy and peace which depends upon nothing in the world for its source or its continuance ; it is innate, it is the very stuff of the soul's consciousness, it is the very nature of divine being. The ordinary man depends upon outward things for his happiness ; therefore he has desire ; therefore he has anger and passion, pleasure and pain, joy and grief ; therefore he measures all things in the balance of good fortune and evil fortune. None of these things can affect the divine soul ; it is ever satisfied without any kind of dependence, *nityatripto nirâçrayah* ; for its delight, its divine ease, its happiness, its glad light are eternal within, ingrained in itself, *âtmaratih, antahsukho 'utarâmas tatthântarjyotir eva cha*. What joy it takes in outward things is not for their sake, not for things which it seeks in them and can miss, but for the self in them, for their expression of the Divine, for that which is eternal in them and which it cannot miss. It is without attachment to their outward touches, but finds everywhere the same joy that

it finds in itself, because it is united with the one and equal Brahman in all their differences, *brahmayoga-yuk-tâtma*, *sarvabhûtâtma-bhûtâtma*. It does not rejoice in the touches of the pleasant or feel anguish in the touches of the unpleasant; neither the wounds of things, nor the wounds of friends, nor the wounds of enemies can disturb the firmness of its outgazing mind or bewilder its receiving heart; this soul is in its nature, as the Upanishad puts it, *avran'am*, without wound or scar. In all things it has the same imperishable Ananda, *sukham a-kshayam açnute*.

That equality, impersonality, peace, joy, freedom does not depend on so outward a thing as doing or not doing works. The Gita insists repeatedly on the difference between the inward and the outward renunciation, *tyāga* and *sannyāsa*. The latter, it says, is valueless without the former, hardly possible even to attain without it, and unnecessary when there is the inward freedom. In fact *tyāga* itself is the real and sufficient Sannyasa. "He should be known as the eternal Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires; free from the dualities he is happily and easily released from all bondage." The painful process of outward Sannyasa, *duhkham āptum*, is an unnecessary process. It is perfectly true that all actions, as well as the fruit of action, have to be given up, to be renounced, but inwardly, not outwardly, not into the inertia of Nature, but to the Lord in sacrifice, into the calm and joy of the Impersonal from whom all action proceeds without disturbing his peace. The true Sannyasa of action is the reposing of all works on the Brahman. "He who, having abandoned attachment, acts reposing (or founding) his works on the Brahman, *brahmanyā thāta karmāni*, is not stained by sin even as water clings not to the lotus-leaf." Therefore the Yogins first "do works with the body, mind, understanding, or even merely with the organs of action, abandoning attachment, for self-purification, *saṅgam tyaktvā-*

tmaçuddhaye. By abandoning attachment to the fruits of works the soul in union with Brahman attains to peace of rapt foundation in Brahman, but the soul not in union is attached to the fruit and bound by the action of desire." The foundation, the purity, the peace once attained, the embodied soul perfectly controlling its nature, having renounced all its actions by the mind, inwardly, not outwardly, "sits in its nine-gated city neither doing nor causing to be done." For this soul is the one impersonal Soul in all, the all-pervading Lord, *prabhu*, *vibhu*, who, as the Impersonal, neither creates the works of the world, nor the mind's idea of being the doer, *na kartr'itvam na karmāni*, nor the coupling of works to their fruits, the chain of cause and effect. All that is worked out by the Nature in the man, *svabhāva*, his principle of self-becoming, as the word literally means. The all-pervading Impersonal accepts neither the sin nor the virtue of any : these are things created by the ignorance in the creature, by his egoism of the doer, by his ignorance of his highest self, by his involution in the operations of Nature, and when the self-knowledge within him is released from this dark envelope, that knowledge lights up like a sun the real self within him ; he knows himself then to be the soul supreme above the instruments of Nature. Pure, infinite, inviolable, immutable, he is no longer affected ; no longer does he imagine himself to be modified by her workings. By complete identification with the Impersonal he can, too, release himself from the necessity of returning by birth into her movement.

And yet this liberation does not at all prevent him from acting. Only, he knows that it is not he who is active, but the modes, the qualities of Nature, her triple *gunas*. "The man who knows the principles of things thinks, his mind in Yoga (with the inactive Impersonal), "*I am doing nothing*"; when he sees, hears, tastes, smells, eats, moves, sleeps, breathes, speaks, takes, ejects, opens his eyes or

closes them, he holds that it is only the senses acting upon the objects of the senses." He himself, safe in the immutable, unmodified soul, is beyond the grip of the three gunas, *triguṇātīta*; he is neither sattvic, rajasic nor tamasic; he sees with a clear untroubled spirit the alternations of the natural modes and qualities in his action, their rhythmic play of light and happiness, activity and force, rest and inertia. This superiority of the calm soul observing its action but not involved in it, this *traiguṇatītya*, is also a high sign of the divine worker. By itself the idea might lead to a doctrine of the mechanical determinism of Nature and the perfect aloofness and irresponsibility of the soul; but the Gita avoids this fault of an insufficient thought by its supertheistic idea of the Purushottama. It makes it clear that it is not in the end Nature which mechanically determines its own action; it is the will of the Supreme which inspires her, he who has already slain the Dhritarashtrians, he of whom Arjuna is only the human instrument. The reposing of works in the Impersonal is a means of getting rid of the personal egoism of the doer, but the end is to give up all the actions to this Lord of all. "With a consciousness identified with the Self, renouncing all thy actions into Me, *mayi sarvāni karmāni sannyasyādhyātma-chetasā*, freed from personal hopes and desires, from the thought of "I" and "mine", delivered from the fever of the soul, fight", work, do my will in the world. The Divine motives, inspires, determines the entire action; the human soul impersonal in the Brahman is the pure and silent channel of his power; that power in the Nature executes the divine movement. Such are the works of the liberated soul, *muktasya karma*, such the actions of the accomplished Karmayogin. They rise from a free spirit and disappear without modifying it, like waves on the surface of conscious, immutable depths. *Gatasauṅasya muktasya jñānavasthitachetasah, yajñâyâcharatah karma samagrabhāvīyate*.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

III

THE CONQUEST OF SELF

TO RENOUNCE DESIRE

- 1 The difficulties which come to birth in the disciple, are ignorance, egoism, desire, aversion and a tenacious will to existence upon the earth.
- 2 There is no better way to cultivate humanity and justice in the heart than to diminish our desires.—
- 3 It is good to have what one desires, but it is better
- 4 to desire nothing more than what one has.—You tell me that good cheer, raiment, riches and luxury are happiness. I believe that the greatest felicity is to desire nothing, and in order to draw near to this supreme happiness, one must habituate oneself to have need of little.
- 5 O children of desire, cast off your garb of vanities.
- 6 —Renounce your desires and you shall taste of peace.
- 7 So long as man has not thrown from him the load of worldly desire which he carries about with him, he cannot be in tranquillity and at peace with him-

1) Patanjali.— 2) Meng-tse.— 3) Menedemus.— 4) Socrates.—
5) Baha-ullah.— 6). Imitation of Christ.— 7) Ramakrishna.

8 self.—The man in whom all desires disappear like rivers into a motionless sea, attains to peace, not he whom they move to longing. That man whose walk is free from longing, for he has thrown all desires from him, who calls nothing his and has no sense of ego, is moving towards peace.

9 Ah ! let us live happy without desires among those who are given up to covetousness. In the midst of men full of desires, let us dwell empty of them.

* *

10 Let us impose upon our desires the yoke of submission to reason, let them be ever calm and never bring trouble into our souls ; thence result wisdom, constancy, moderation.

11 The man veritably free is he who, disburdened of fear and desire, is subjected only to his reason.—

12 Whoever prefers to all else his reason, does not enact tragedy, does not bewail himself, seeks neither solitude nor the crowd, but, greatest of all goods, he shall live without desire and without fear.

13 When his thought and feeling are perfectly under regulation and stand firm in his Self, then, unmoved to longing by any desire, he is said to be in union with the Self.

14 He has read everything, learned everything, practised everything, who has renounced his desires and lives without any straining of hope.

* *

15 The breath of desire and pleasure so ravages the world that it has extinguished the torch of knowledge and understanding.

8) Bhagavad Gita II. 70-71.— 9) Dhammapada.— 10) Cicero.—
11) Fénelon.— 12) Marcus Aurelius.— 13) Bhagavad Gita VI. 18,
— 14) Hitopadeśa.— 15) Baha-ullah.

- 16 As the troubled surface of rolling waters cannot reflect aright the full moon, but gives only broken images of it, so the mentality troubled by the desires and passions of the world cannot reflect fully the
 17 light of the Eternal.—Then is the Eternal seen when the mind is at rest. When the sea of mind is tossed by the winds of desire, it cannot reflect the Eternal and all divine vision is impossible.
- 18 Man, wouldst thou be a sage, wouldst thou know thyself and know God? First thou shouldst extinguish in thyself the desire of the world.—Desire nothing. Rage not against the unalterable laws of Nature. Struggle only against the personal, the transient,
 20 the ephemeral, the perishable.—The light of thy spirit cannot destroy these shades of night so long as thou hast not driven out desire from thy soul.—
 21 When thou art enfranchised from all hate and desire, then shalt thou win thy liberation.
- 22 Expel thy desires and fears and there shall be no
 23 longer any tyrant over thee.—If thou wouldst be free, accustom thyself to curb thy desires.
- 24 Slay thy desires, O disciple, make powerless thy vices, before thou takest the first step of that solemn
 25 journey.—Slay desire, but when thou hast slain it, take heed that it arise not again from the dead.
- 26 Surmount the desires of which gods and men are the subjects.
- 27 How canst thou desire anything farther when in thyself there are God and all things?

16) Ramakrishna. — 17) id. — 18) Angelus Silesius. — 19) Book of Golden Precepts. — 20) Hindu Wisdom. — 21) Dhammapada. — 22) Marcus Aurelius. — 23) Tolstoi. — 24) Book of Golden Precepts. — 25) id. — 26) Uttara Sutta. — 27) Angelus Silesius.

The Psychology of Social Development

XVIII

In spirituality lies then the ultimate, the only hope for the perfection whether of the individual or of the communal man ; not the spirit which for its separate satisfaction turns away from the earth and her works, but that greater spirit which accepts and fulfils them. A spirituality taking up into itself man's rationalism, æstheticism, ethicism, vitalism, corporeality, his aim of knowledge, his aim of beauty, his aim of love and perfection, his aim of power and fullness of life and being, revealing to them their divine sense and the conditions of their godhead, reconciling them all to each other, illuminating to the vision of each the way which they now tread in half-lights and shadows, in blindness or with a deflected sight, is a goal which even man's too self-sufficient reason can accept ; for it reveals itself surely in the end as the logical, inevitable development and consummation of all for which he is individually and socially striving. The evolution of the inchoate spirituality in mankind is the possibility to which an age of subjectivism is the first glimmer of awakening or towards which it at least shows the first profound potentiality of return. A deeper, wider, greater, more spiritualised subjective understanding of the

individual and communal self and life and reliance on the spiritual light and the spiritual means for the solution of its problems are the only way to true social perfection. The free rule, that is to say, the predominant leading, influence, guidance of the developed spiritual man,—not the half-spiritualised or the raw religionist,—is our hope for the divine guidance of humanity. A spiritualised society is our hope for a communal happiness ; or in words which, though liable to abuse by the reason and the passions, are still the most expressive we can find, a new kind of theocracy, the kingdom of God upon earth, a theocracy which shall be the government of mankind by the Divine in the hearts and minds of men.

Certainly, this will not come about easily, or, as men have always vainly hoped from each great new turn and revolution of politics and society, by the sudden and at once entirely satisfying change of some magical transformation. The change, however it comes about, will certainly be of the nature of a miracle, as are all great changes and developments ; for they have the appearance of a kind of realised impossibility. But God works all his miracles by an evolution of secret possibilities which have been long prepared, at least in their elements, and in the end by a rapid bringing of all to a head, a throwing together of the elements so that in their fusion they produce a new form and name of things and reveal a new spirit. Often the change is preceded by an apparent emphasising and raising to their extreme of things which seem the very denial, the most uncompromising opposite of the new principle and the new creation. Such an evolution of the elements of a spiritualised society is that which a subjective age makes at least possible ; and that at the same time it raises to the last height of active power things which seem the very denial of such a potentiality, need be no index of its practical impossibility, but on the contrary may be the sign of its approach.

Certainly, the whole effort of a subjective age may go wrong; but this happens oftenest when by the insufficiency of its materials, a great crudeness of its starting-point, a hasty shallowness or narrow intensity of its inlook into itself and things it is foredoomed to a fundamental error of self-knowledge. It becomes less likely when the spirit of the age is full of freedom, variety, a many-sided seeking, an effort after knowledge and perfection in all the domains of human activity, a straining after the infinite and the divine on many sides and in many aspects. In such circumstances, though a full advance may possibly not be made, a great advance may be safely predicted.

We have seen that there are necessarily three stages of the social evolution or, generally, of the human evolution in both individual and society. It starts with an infra-rational stage in which men have not yet learned to refer their life and action in its principles and its forms to the judgment of the clarified intelligence; they act principally out of their instincts, impulses, spontaneous ideas and vital intuitions. It proceeds to a rational age in which the intelligent will of mankind more or less developed becomes the judge, arbiter and presiding motive of his thought, feeling and action, the moulder, destroyer and recreator of his leading ideas, aims and intuitions. It moves towards a suprarational or spiritual age in which he perceives a higher divine end, a divine sanction, a divine light of guidance for all he seeks to be, think, feel, do, and tries to obey it and live in it, not by any rule of infra-rational religious impulse and ecstasy, such as characterised or rather darkly illumined the obscure confusion and brute violence of the Middle Ages, but by a higher spiritual living for which the clarities of the reason are a necessary preparation and into which they too are taken up and transformed.

These stages or periods are much more inevitable

in the psychological evolution of mankind than the Stone and other Ages marked out by Science in his instrumental culture, for they depend not on outward means or accidents, but on the very nature of his being. But we must not suppose that they are naturally exclusive and absolute in their nature, or complete in their tendency or fulfilment when they come, or rigidly marked off from each other in their action or their time. They not only arise out of each other, but may be partially developed in each other; they may coexist in different parts of the earth at the same time. But, especially, since man is always a complex being, even man savage or degenerate, he cannot be any of these things exclusively or absolutely. Man not being an animal, even the infra-rational man cannot be utterly infra-rational, but must have or tend to have some kind of play more or less evolved or involved of the reason and a more or less crude supra-rational element, a more or less disguised working of the spirit. Not being a pure mental being, a pure intelligence, he cannot be wholly or merely rational. Not being a god, but at his highest a divinised human being, his very spirituality, however dominant, must have its rational and infra-rational tendencies and elements. And as with the psychological life of individuals, so must it be with the ages of his communal existence. They must be marked off from each other by the predominant play of one element, its force overpowering the others perhaps or taking them into itself; but an exclusive play is neither intended nor possible.

Thus an infra-rational period of human and social development need not be without its elements, its strong elements of reason and of spirituality. Even the savage, whether he be primitive or degenerate man, has some coherent idea of this world and the beyond, a theory of life and a religion. To us with our more advanced rationality his theory of life may seem incoherent, because

we have lost its point of view and its principle of mental associations. But it is still an act of reason, and within its limits he is capable of a sufficient play of thought both ideative and practical, as well as a clear ethical idea and motive, some æsthetic notions and an understood order of society poor and barbarous to our view, but well enough contrived and put together to serve the simplicity of its objects. Or, again we may not realise the element of reason in a primitive theory of life or of spirituality in a barbaric religion, because it seems to us to be made up of symbols and forms to which a superstitious value seems to be attached by these undeveloped minds. But this is because the reason at this stage has an imperfect and limited action, the element of spirituality is crude or undeveloped and not yet self-conscious; in order to hold firmly their working and make them real and concrete to himself, primitive man has to give them shape in symbols and forms to which he clings with a barbaric awe and reverence, because they alone can embody for him his method of self-guidance in life. For the dominant thing in him is his infrarational life of instinct, vital intuition and impulse, and it is that to which the rest of him has to give some kind of primary order and first glimmerings of light. The unrefined reason and unenlightened spirit in him cannot work for their own ends; they are bond-slaves of his infra-rational being.

At a higher stage of development or of a return towards a fuller evolution,—for in all probability the actual savage in humanity is not the original primitive man, but a relapse and reversion towards primitiveness,—the infra-rational stage of society may arrive at a very high order of civilisation. It may have great intuitions of the meaning or general intention of its life, admirable ideas of the arrangement of life, a harmonious, well-adapted, durable and serviceable social system, an imposing religion which will not be without its profundities, but in which symbol

and ceremonial will form the largest portion and for the mass of men will be almost the whole of religion. In this stage pure reason and pure spirituality will not govern the society or move large bodies of men, but will be represented, if at all, by individuals at first few, but growing in number as these two powers increase in their purity and vigour and attract more and more votaries.

This may well lead to an age, if the development of reason is strongest, of great individual thinkers who seize on some idea of life and its origins and laws and erect that into a philosophy, of critical minds standing isolated above the mass who judge life, not yet with a luminous largeness, a minute flexibility of understanding or a clear and comprehensive profundity, but still with power of intelligence, insight, acuteness, perhaps even a pre-eminent social thinker here and there who, taking advantage of some crisis or disturbance, is able to get the society to modify or reconstruct itself on the basis of some clearly rational and intelligent principle. Such an age seems to be represented by the traditions of the beginnings of Greek civilisation, or rather the beginnings of its mobile and progressive period. Or if spirituality predominates, there will be great mystics delving into the deeper psychological possibilities and truths of our being, divining and realising the truth of the self and spirit in man, and though they keep these things secret and imparted to a small number of initiates, yet deepening with them the crude forms of the popular life ; even such a development is obscurely indicated in the old traditions of the mysteries, and we see it taking in prehistoric India a quite peculiar turn which, as it developed, determined the whole future trend of the society and made Indian civilisation a thing apart and of its own kind in the history of the human race. But these things are only a first beginning of light in the midst of a humanity which is still infra-rational as well as infra-spiritual and, even when

it undergoes the influence of these precursors, does so obscurely, without any clearly intelligent or awakened spiritual reception of what they give or impose. It still turns everything into infra-rational form and disfiguring tradition and lives spiritually by ill-understood symbol and ceremonial. It feels obscurely these higher things, tries to live them in its own way, but it does not yet understand.

As reason and spirituality develop, they begin to become a larger and more diffused force, less intense perhaps, but wider and more effective on the mass. The mystics become the sowers of the seed of a great spiritual development in which whole classes of society and even men from all classes seek the light, as happened in India in the age of the Upanishads. The solitary individual thinkers are replaced by a great number of writers, poets, thinkers, rhetoricians, sophists, scientific inquirers, who pour out a great flood of acute speculation and inquiry, as happened in Greece in the age of the sophists. The spiritual development, arising uncurbed by reason in an infra-rational society, has often a tendency to outrun at first the rational and intellectual. For the greatest illuminating force of the infra-rational man, as he develops, is an inferior intuition, an instinctively intuitional sight arising out of the force of life in him, and the transition from this to an intensity of inner life and the growth of a deeper spiritual intuition which outleaps the intellect and seems to dispense with it, is an easy passage in the individual man. But for humanity at large this movement cannot last; the mind and intellect must develop to their fullness so that the spirituality of the race may rise upon a broad basis of the developed lower nature in man the intelligent mental being. Therefore we see the intelligence in its growth either doing away with the distinct spiritual tendency for a time, as in Greece, or spinning itself out around its first data and activities, so that, as in India, the mystic

seer is replaced by the philosopher-mystic, the religious thinker and the philosopher pure and simple.

For a time the new growth and impulse may seem to be taking possession of a whole community as in Athens or in old Aryan India. But these early dawns cannot endure in their purity, so long as the race is not ready. There is a crystallisation, a lessening of the first impetus, a new growth of infrarational forms in which the thought or the spirituality is overgrown by or imbedded in the form and may even die in it, while the tradition of the living knowledge, the higher life and activity remains the property of the higher classes or a highest class. The multitude remains infrarational in its habit of mind, though perhaps still keeping in capacity an enlivened intelligence or a greater spiritual receptiveness as its gain from the past. So long as the hour of the rational age has not arrived, the irrational period of society cannot be overpassed ; and that can only be when not a class or a few, but the multitude has learned to think, to exercise its intelligence actively,—it matters not at first however imperfectly,—upon their life, their needs, their rights, their duties, their aspirations as human beings. Until then we have as the highest development a mixed society, infrarational in the mass, with a higher class whose business it is to seek after the reason and the spirit, to keep the gains of mankind in these fields, to add to them, to enlighten and raise with them as much as possible the life of the society.

At this point we see Nature in her human society moving forward slowly on the various lines of activity towards a greater application of reason and spirituality which shall at last bring near the possibility of a rational age of mankind. Her difficulties proceed from two sides. First, as she originally developed thought and reason by exceptional individuals, so she develops them in the mass by exceptional communities, classes and nations. But the exceptional nation touched by a developed reason or spi-

rituality or both, as Greece and later Rome in ancient Europe, India, China and Persia, in ancient Asia, is surrounded or neighboured by great masses of the old infra-rational humanity and endangered by them ; for until a developed science comes in to redress the balance, the barbarian has always a greater physical force and unexhausted native power of aggression than the cultured community. At this stage civilisation always collapses in the end before the attack. Then Nature has to train more or less slowly, with great difficulty and much loss and delay, the conquerors to develop among themselves what they have temporarily destroyed or impaired. In the end humanity gains by the process ; for a greater mass of the nations is brought in, a larger and more living force of progress applied, a starting-point arrived at for richer and more varied gains. But a certain loss is always the price of this advance.

Within the communities themselves reason and spirituality are at this stage always hampered and endangered by existing in a milieu and atmosphere not their own. The classes which are in charge of them, are obliged to throw them into forms which the great mass of human ignorance they lead and rule will accept, and both reason and spirituality tend to be stifled by these forms, to get stereotyped, fossilised, void of life, bound up from their natural play. Secondly, being part of the mass, these classes are themselves much under the influences of their infra-rational parts and do not, except in individuals, arrive at the entirely free play of pure reason or the free light of the spirit. Thirdly, there is always the danger of these classes gravitating downward to the ignorance below them or even collapsing into it. She guards herself by various devices for maintaining the tradition of intellectual and spiritual activity in the favoured classes, making it a point of honour for them to preserve and promote the national culture, establishing a preservative system of education and

discipline. And in order that all these things may not degenerate into mere traditionalism, she brings in a series of intellectual and spiritual movements which by their shock revivify the failing life and help to bring about a broadening and enlarging and to drive reason and spirituality deeper down into the infrarational mass. Each movement indeed tends to petrify after a shorter or longer activity, but a fresh shock and wave arrive in time to save and regenerate. Finally, she reaches the point when, having overcome all immediate danger of relapse, she can proceed to her next great advance in the cycle of social evolution. This must take the form of a universalising of the habit of reason and the application of the intelligence and intelligent will to life, thus instituting a rational age of human society.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXIX

The only means readily suggesting itself by which the necessary group-freedom can be preserved and yet the unification of the human race achieved, is to strive not towards a closely organised world-State, but towards a free, elastic and progressive world-union. If this is to be done, we shall have to discourage that almost inevitable tendency which must lead any unification by political, economical and administrative means, in a word, by the force of machinery, to follow the analogy of the evolution of the nation-State; we shall have to encourage and revive that force of idealistic nationalism which before the present War seemed on the point of being crushed on the one side under the weight of the increasing world-empires of England, Russia, France and latterly Germany, on the other by the progress of the opposite ideal of internationalism with its large and devastating contempt for the narrow ideas of country and nation and its denunciation of the evils of nationalistic patriotism. And in addition we shall have to find a cure for the as yet incurable separative sentiments natural to the very idea to which we shall have to give a renewed strength. How is all this to be done?

On our side in the attempt we have the natural principle of compensating reactions. Whatever may be the

validity of the law of action and reaction in physical Science, in human action, which must always depend largely on psychological forces, it is a constant truth. That to every action there is a tendency of reaction which may not operate immediately, but must operate eventually, which may not act with an equal and entirely compensating force, but must act with some force of compensation, may be taken as well established ; it is both a philosophical necessity and a constant fact of experience. For we see that Nature works in this fashion ; having for some time insisted on the dominant force of one tendency, she seeks to correct its exaggerations by reviving or newly awakening or bringing into the field in a new and modified form the opposite tendency. After a long insistence on centralisation she tries to modify it by at least a subordinated decentralisation ; having long insisted on more uniformity she calls again into play the spirit of variation. The result need not be an equipollence of the two tendencies, it may be any kind of compromise ; or instead of a compromise it may be in act a fusion and in result a new creation which shall be a compound of both principles. We may expect her to apply the same method to the tendencies of unification and group variation in dealing with the great mass unit of humanity. At present the nation is the fulcrum which the latter tendency has been using for its workings as against the imperialistic tendency of unifying assimilation. The course of Nature's working in humanity may either destroy the nation unit, as she destroyed the tribe and clan, and develop a quite new principle of grouping or else may preserve it and give it sufficient power of vitality and duration to balance usefully the trend towards too heavy a force of unification. It is this latter contingency that we have to consider.

The two forces in action before the war were Imperialism—of various colours, as the more rigid imperialism of Germany, the more liberal imperialism of

England,—and nationalism. They were the two sides of one phenomenon, the aggressive or expansive and the defensive aspects of national egoism. But in the trend of imperialism this egoism had some eventual chance of dissolving itself by excessive self-enlargement, as the aggressive tribe disappeared, for example, the Persian tribe first into the empire and then into the nationality of the Persian people, or as the city-state also disappeared, first into the Roman empire and then both tribe and city-state without hope of revival into the nations which arose by fusion out of the irruption of the German tribes into the declining Latin unity. So aggressive national Imperialism by overspreading the world might end in destroying altogether the nation unit in precisely the same way as the city-state and tribe were destroyed by the aggressive expansion of a few city-states and tribes. Defensive nationalism has been a force reacting against this tendency and restricting it to the best of its ability. But before the War, the separative force of nationalism seemed doomed to impotence and final suppression before the tremendous power with which science, organisation and efficiency had armed the governing States of the large imperial aggregates.

All the facts were pointing in one direction. Corea had disappeared into the nascent Japanese empire on the mainland of Asia. Persian nationalism had succumbed and lay suppressed under a system of spheres of influence which were really a veiled protectorate, and all experience shows that the beginning of a protectorate is also the beginning of the end of the protected nation ; it is an euphemistic name for the first process of chewing previous to deglutition. Tibet and Siam were so weak and visibly declining that their continued immunity could not be hoped for. China itself had only escaped by the jealousies of the world-Powers and by its size which made it an awkward morsel to swallow, let alone to digest. The par-

tion of all Asia between four or five or at the most six great empires seemed a foregone conclusion which nothing but an unexampled international convulsion could prevent. The European conquest of Northern Africa had practically been completed by the disappearance of Morocco, the confirmed English protectorate over Egypt and the Italian hold on Tripoli. Somaliland was in a preliminary process of slow deglutition; Abyssinia, saved once by Menelik but now torn by internal discord, was the object of a revived dream of Italian colonial empire. The Boer republics had gone under before the advancing tide of imperialistic aggression. All the rest of Africa practically was the private property of three great Powers and two small ones. In Europe no doubt there were still a few small independent nations, Balkan and Teutonic, and also two quite unimportant neutralised countries. But the Balkans were a constant theatre of uncertainty and disturbance and the rival national egoisms could only have ended, in case of the ejection of Turkey from Europe, either by the formation of a young, hungry and ambitious Slav empire under the dominance of Servia or Bulgaria or by their disappearance into the shadow of Austria and Russia. The Teutonic states were coveted by expanding Germany and, had that Power been guided by the prudently daring diplomacy of a new Bismarck,—a not unlikely contingency, could William II have gone to the grave before letting loose the hounds of war,—their absorption might well have been compassed. There remained America where imperialism had not yet arisen, but it was already emerging in the form of Rooseveltian Republicanism, and the interference in Mexico, hesitating as it was, yet pointed to the inevitability of a protectorate and a final absorption of the disorderly Central American republics; the union of South America would then have become a defensive necessity. It was only the stupendous cataclysm of the world-war which interfered with the pro-

gressive march towards the division of the world into less than a dozen great empires.

The War has revived with a startling force the idea of free nationality, throwing it up in three forms, each with a stamp of its own. First, in opposition to the imperialistic ambitions of Germany in Europe the allied nations, although themselves empires, have been obliged to appeal to and champion a qualified ideal of free nationality. Secondly, America, more politically idealistic than Europe, has entered the war with a cry for a league of free nations. Finally, the pure idealism of the Russian revolution has cast into this new creative chaos an entirely new element by the distinct, positive, uncompromising recognition, free from all reserves of diplomacy and self-interest, of the right of every aggregate of men naturally marked off from other aggregates to decide its own political status and destiny. These three positions are in fact distinct from each other, but each has in effect some relation to the actually possible future of humanity. The first bases itself upon the present conditions and aims at a certain practical rearrangement; the second tries to hasten into immediate practicability a not entirely remote possibility of the future; the third aims at bringing into precipitation by the alchemy of revolution,—for what we inappropriately call revolution, is only a rapidly concentrated movement of evolution,—a yet remote end which in the ordinary course of events could only be realised, if at all, in the far distant future. All of them have to be considered; for a prospect which only takes into view existing realised forces or apparently realisable possibilities is foredoomed to error. Moreover, the Russian idea by its attempt at self-effectuation, however immediately ineffective, has rendered itself an actual force which must be reckoned with. A great idea already striving to enforce itself in the field of practice is a force which cannot be left out of count, nor valued only according to its apparent chances of immedi-

ate effectuation.

The position take by England, France and Italy, the European section of the Allies, contemplates a political rearrangement of the world, but not any radical change of its existing order. It is true that it enounces the principle of free nationalities ; but in international politics which is still a play of natural forces and interests and in which ideals are only a comparatively recent development of the human mind, principles can only prevail where and so far as they are consonant with interests, or where and so far as, being hostile to interests, they are yet assisted by natural forces strong enough to overbear the interests which oppose them. The pure application of ideals to politics is as yet a revolutionary method of action which can only be hoped for in exceptional crises ; the day when it becomes a rule of life, human nature and life itself will have become a new phenomenon, something almost superterrestrial and divine. That day is not yet. The allied Powers in Europe are themselves nations with an imperial past and an imperial future ; they cannot, even if they wished, get away by the force of a mere word, a mere idea from that past and that future. Their first interest and therefore the first duty of their statesmen must be to preserve the empire, and even, where it can in their view be legitimately done, to increase it ; the principle of free nationality can only be applied by them in its purity where their own imperial interests are not affected, as against Turkey and the Central Powers, because there the principle is consonant with their own interests and can be supported as against German, Austrian or Turkish interests by the natural force of a successful war justified morally in its result because it was invited by the Powers which will have to suffer. It cannot be applied in its purity where their own imperial interests are affected, because there it is opposed to existing interests and there is no sufficient countervailing force by

which that opposition can be counteracted. Here therefore it must be acted upon in a qualified sense, as a force moderating that of pure imperialism. So applied it will amount in fact to the concession of internal self-government or Home Rule in such proportion, at such a time or by such stages as may be possible, practicable and expedient for the interests of the empire and of the subject nation so far as they can be accommodated with one another. It must be understood, in other words, as the common sense of the ordinary man would understand it; it cannot be and has nowhere been understood in the sense which would be attached to it by the pure idealist of the Russian type who is careless of all but the naked purity of his principle.

What then would be the practical consequences of this qualified principle of free nationality as it would be possible to apply it in the result of a complete victory of the Allied Powers, its representatives? In America it would have no field of immediate application. In Africa there are not only no free nations, but with the exception of Egypt and Abyssinia no nations, properly speaking; for Africa is the one part of the world where the old tribal conditions have still survived and only tribal peoples exist, not nations in the political sense of the word. Here then a complete victory of the Allies would mean the partition of the continent between three colonial Empires, Italy, France and England, with the continuance of the Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese enclaves and the precarious continuance for a time of the Abyssinian kingdom. In Asia it would mean the appearance of three or four new nationalities out of the ruins of the Turkish empire; but these by their immaturity would all be foredoomed to remain, for a time at least, under the influence or the protection of one or other of the great Powers. In Europe it would imply the diminution of Germany by the loss of Alsace and Poland, the disintegration of

the Austrian empire,* the reversion of the Adriatic coast to Servia and Italy, the liberation of the Czech and Polish nations, some rearrangement in the Balkan Peninsula and the adjacent countries, and perhaps, sooner or later, the conversion of Hungary into a Slavic state with a large Magyar minority. All this, it is clear, would mean a great change in the map of the world, but no radical transformation. The existing tendency of nationalism would gain some extension by the creation of some new independent nations; the existing tendency of imperial aggregation would gain a great extension by the expansion of the actual territory, of the world-wide influence and of the international responsibilities of the successful empires.

Still certain very important results will have been gained which must make in the end for a free world-union. The most important of these, the result of the Russian Revolution born out of the war and its battle-cry of free nationality, but still contingent on the success of the revolutionary principle, will be the disappearance of Russia as an aggressive empire and its transformation from an imperialistic aggregate into a congeries or a federation of independent republics. The second will be the destruction of the German type of imperialism and the salvation of a number of independent nationalities which lay under its menace. The third will be the multiplication of distinct nationalities with a claim to the recognition of their separate existence and legitimate voice in the affairs of the world, which will make for the strengthening of the idea of a free world-union as the ultimate solution of international problems. The fourth is the definite recognition by the British nation of the qualified principle of free nationality in the inevitable reorganisation of the empire.

* This possibility has been modified by a recent pronouncement. But the modification is inconsistent with the free choice of their future by the Slav peoples.

This development has taken two forms, the definite recognition of the principle of Home Rule in Ireland and India and the recognition of the claim of each constituent nation to a voice, which in the event of Home Rule must mean a free and equal voice, in the councils of the Empire. Taken together these two things mean the ultimate conversion from an empire constituted on the old principle of nationalistic imperialism which was represented by the supreme government of one predominant nation, England, into a free and equal commonwealth of nations managing their common affairs through a supple coordination by mutual good will and agreement. In other words, it will mean in the end the application within certain limits of precisely that principle which would underlie the constitution on the larger scale of a free world-union. Much work will have to be done, several extensions made, many counterforces overcome before this commonwealth can become a realised fact, but that it should have taken shape in the principle and the germ, is a notable event in world-history. Two questions remain. What will be the effect of this experiment on the other empires which adhere to the old principle of a dominant centralisation? Probably it will have this effect, if it succeeds, that as they are faced by the growth of strong nationalistic movements, they will be led to adopt the same or a similar solution, just as they adopted from England with modifications her successful system of Parliamentary government in the affairs of the nation. Secondly, what of the relations between these empires and the many independent non-imperial nations or republics which will exist under the new arrangement of the world? How are they to be preserved from fresh attempts to extend the imperial idea, or how is their existence to be correlated in the international comity with the huge and overshadowing power of the great empires? It is here that the American idea of the League

of free nations intervenes and finds its justification.

Unfortunately, it is still difficult to know what exactly this idea will mean in practice. The utterances of its spokesman, President Wilson, have been marked hitherto by a magnificent nebulous idealism full of inspiring ideas and phrases, but empty of any clear and specific application. We must look for light to the past history and the traditional temperament of the American people. The United States have always been pacific and non-imperialistic, yet with an undertone of nationalistic susceptibility which threatened recently to take an imperialistic turn and has led the nation to make two or three wars ending in conquests whose results it had then to reconcile with its non-imperialistic pacifism. It annexed Mexican Texas by war and then turned it into a constituent State of the union, swamping it at the same time with American colonists. It conquered Cuba from Spain and the Philippines first from Spain and then from the insurgent Filipinos and, not being able to swamp them with colonists, gave Cuba independence under the American influence and has promised the Filipinos a complete independence which it will no doubt protect against any other foreign aggression. American idealism is governed by a shrewd sense of American interests, and highest among these interests is reckoned the preservation of the American political idea and its constitution, to which all imperialism foreign or American is regarded as a moral peril.

We may take it then that the League of nations as announced will have both an opportunist and an idealistic element. The opportunist element will make it take in its first form the legalisation of the map and political formation of the world as it will emerge from the convulsion of the war. Its idealistic side will be the use of the influence of America in the league to favour the increasing application of the democratic principle

everywhere and the final emergence of a United States of the world with a democratic Congress of the nations as its governing agency. The legalisation will have the good effect of minimising the chances of war,—provided always the league proves practicable and succeeds, which is by no means a foregone conclusion. But it will have the bad effect of tending to stereotype a state of things which must be in part artificial, irregular, anomalous and only temporarily useful. Law is necessary for order and stability, but it becomes a conservative and hampering force unless it provides itself with an effective machinery for changing the laws as soon as circumstances and new needs make that desirable. This can only happen when the Parliament, Congress or free Council of the nations becomes an accomplished thing. Meanwhile how is the added force for the conservation of old principles to be counteracted and an evolution assured which will lead to the consummation desired by the democratic American ideal? America's influence in the League will not be sufficient for that purpose; for it will have at its side other influences interested in preserving the status quo and some interested in developing the imperialist solution. Another force, another influence is needed. Here the Russian ideal with the great though as yet quite chaotic attempt to apply it intervenes and finds its justification. For our present purpose it is the most interesting and important of the three anti-imperialistic influences which Nature has thrown into her great crucible of war and revolution.

The Future Poetry

THE ESSENCE OF POETRY

In order to get a firm clue which we can follow fruitfully in the retrospect and prospect we have proposed to ourselves, it will not be amiss to enquire what is the highest power we demand from poetry ; or,—let us put it more largely and get nearer the root of the matter,—what may be the nature of poetry, its essential law, and how out of that arises the possibility of its use as the *mantra* of the Real. Not that we need spend a vain effort in labouring to define anything so profound, elusive and indefinable as the breath of poetic creation ; to take the myriad-stringed harp of Saraswati to pieces for the purpose of scientific analysis must always be a narrow and rather barren amusement. But we do stand in need of some guiding intuitions, some helpful descriptions which will serve to enlighten our search ; and to fix in that way, not by definition, but by description, the essential things in poetry is neither an impossible, nor an unprofitable endeavour.

We meet here two common enough errors, to one of which the ordinary uninstructed mind is most liable, to the other the too instructed critic or the too intellectually conscientious artist or craftsman. To the ordinary mind, judging poetry without really entering into it, it looks as if it were nothing more than an aesthetic pleasure of the imagination, the intellect and the ear, a sort of elevated pastime. If that were all, we need not have wasted time in seeking for its spirit, its inner aim, its deeper law. Anything pretty, pleasant and melodious with a beautiful idea in it would serve our turn ; a song of Anacreon or a plaint of Minnerva is would be as good as the Oedipus, Agamemnon or Odyssey, for from this point of view they might well strike us as equally and even, one might contend, more perfect in their light, but exquisite unity and brevity. Pleasure, certainly, we expect from poetry as from all art ; but the external sensible and even the inner imaginative pleasure are only first elements ; refined in order to meet the highest requirements of the intelligence, the imagination and the ear, they have to be still farther heightened and in their nature raised beyond even their own noblest levels.

For neither the intelligence, the imagination nor the ear are the true recipients of the poetic delight, even

as they are not its true creators ; they are only its channels and instruments : the true creator, the true hearer is the soul. The more rapidly and transparently the rest do their work of transmission, the less they make of their separate claim to satisfaction, the more directly the word reaches and sinks deep into the soul, the greater the poetry. Therefore poetry has not really done its work, at least its highest work, until it has raised the pleasure of the instrument and transmuted it into the deeper delight of the soul. A divine Ananda, a delight interpretative, creative, revealing, formative,—one might almost say, an inverse reflection of the joy which the universal Soul has felt in its great release of energy when it rang out into the rhythmic forms of the universe the spiritual truth, the large interpretative idea, the life, the power, the emotion of things packed into its original creative vision,—such spiritual joy is that which the soul of the poet feels and which, when he can conquer the human difficulties of his task, he succeeds in pouring also into all those who are prepared to receive it. And this delight is not merely a godlike pastime ; it is a great formative and illuminative power.

The critic—of a certain type—or the intellectually conscientious artist will, on the other hand, often talk as if poetry were mainly a matter of a faultlessly correct or at most an exquisite technique. Certainly, in all art good technique is the first step towards perfection ; but there are so many other steps, there is a whole world beyond before you can get near to what you seek ; so much so that even a deficient correctness of execution will not prevent an intense and gifted soul from creating great poetry which keeps its hold on the centuries. Moreover, technique, however indispensable, occupies a smaller field perhaps in poetry than in any other art,—first, because its instrument, the rhythmic word, is fuller of subtle and immaterial elements ; then because, the most complex, flexible, variously suggestive of all the instruments of the artistic creator, it has more infinite possibilities in many directions than any other. The rhythmic word has a subtly sensible element, its sound value, a quite immaterial element, its significance or thought-value, and both of these again, its sound and its sense, have separately and together a soul value, a direct spiritual power, which is infinitely the most important thing about

them. And though this comes to birth with a small element subject to the laws of technique, yet almost immediately, almost at the beginning of its flight, its power soars up beyond the province of any laws of mechanical construction.

Rather it determines itself its own form. The poet least of all artists needs to create with his eye fixed anxiously on the technique of his art. He has to possess it, no doubt ; but in the heat of creation the intellectual sense of it becomes a subordinate action or even a mere undertone in his mind, and in his best moments he is permitted, in a way, to forget it altogether. For then the perfection of his sound-movement and style come entirely as the spontaneous form of his soul : that utters itself in an inspired rhythm and an innate, a revealed word, even as the universal Soul created the harmonies of the universe out of the power of the word secret and eternal within him, leaving the mechanical work to be done in a surge of hidden spiritual excitement by the subconscious part of his Nature. It is this highest speech which is the supreme poetic utterance, the immortal element in his poetry, and a little of it is enough to save the rest of his work from oblivion. *Swalpan apyasya dharmasya !*

This power makes the rhythmic word of the poet the highest form of speech available to man for the expression whether of his self-vision or of his world-vision. It is noticeable that even the highest experience, the pure spiritual which enters into things that can never be wholly expressed, still, when it does try to express them and not merely to explain them intellectually, tends instinctively to use, often the rhythmic forms, almost always the manner of speech characteristic of poetry. But poetry attempts to extend this manner of vision and utterance to all experience, even the most objective, and therefore it has a natural urge towards the expression of something in the object beyond its mere appearances, even when these seem outwardly to be all that it is enjoying.

We may usefully cast a glance, not at the last inexpressible secret, but at the first elements of this heightening and intensity peculiar to poetic utterance. Ordinary speech uses language mostly for a limited practical utility of communication ; it uses it for life and for the expression of ideas and feelings necessary or useful to life. In doing so, we treat words as conventional signs for ideas

with nothing but a perfunctory attention to their natural force, much as we use any kind of common machine or simple implement; ; we treat them as if, though useful for life, they were themselves without life. When we wish to put a more vital power into them, we have to lend it to them out of ourselves, by marked intonations of the voice, by the emotional force or vital energy we throw into the sound so as to infuse into the conventional word-sign something which is not inherent in itself. But if we go back earlier in the history of language and still more if we look into its origins, we shall, I think, find that it was not always so with human speech. Words had not only a real and vivid life of their own, but the speaker was more conscious of it than we can possibly be with our mechanised and sophisticated intellects. This arose from the primitive nature of language which, probably, in its first movement was not intended,—or shall we say, did not intend,—so much to stand for distinct ideas of the intelligence as for feelings, sensations, broad indefinite mental impressions with minute shades of quality in them which we do not now care to pursue. The intellectual sense in its precision must have been a secondary element which grew more dominant as language evolved.

For the reason why sound came to express fixed ideas, lies not in any natural and inherent equivalence between the sound and its intellectual sense, for there is none,—intellectually any sound might express any sense, if men were agreed on a conventional equivalence between them; it started from an indefinable quality or property in the sound to raise certain vibrations in the life-soul of the human creature, in his sensational, his emotional, his crude mental being. An example may indicate more clearly what I mean. The word *wolf*, the origin of which is no longer present to our minds, denotes to our intelligence a certain living object and that is all, the rest we have to do for ourselves: the Sanskrit word *vrika*, “tearer”, came in the end to do the same thing, but originally it expressed the sensational relation between the wolf and man which most affected the man's life, and it did so by a certain quality in the sound which readily associated it with the sensation of tearing. This must have given early language a powerful life, a concrete vigour, in one direction a natural poetic force which it has lost, however greatly it has gained in precision, clarity, utility.

Now, poetry goes back in a way and recovers, though in another fashion, as much as it can of this original element. It does this partly by a stress on the image replacing the old sensational concreteness, partly by a greater attention to the suggestive force of the sound, its life, its power, the mental impression it carries. It associates this with the definitive thought value contributed by the intelligence and increases both by each other. In that way it succeeds at the same time in carrying up the power of speech to the direct expression of a higher reach of experience than the intellectual or vital. For it brings out not only the definitive intellectual value of the word, not only its power of emotion and sensation, its vital suggestion, but through and beyond these its soul-suggestion, its spirit. So poetry arrives at the indication of infinite meanings beyond the finite intellectual meaning the word carries. It expresses not only the life-soul of man as did the primitive word, not only the ideas of his intelligence for which speech now usually serves, but the experience, the vision, the ideas, as we may say, of the higher and wider soul in him. Making them real to our-life soul as well as present to our intellect, it opens to us by the word the doors of the Spirit.

Prose style carries speech to a much higher power than its ordinary use, but it differs from poetry in not making this yet greater attempt. For it takes its stand firmly on the intellectual value of the word. It uses rhythms which ordinary speech neglects, and aims at a general fluid harmony of movement. It seeks to associate words agreeably and luminously so as at once to please and to clarify the intelligence. It strives after a more accurate, subtle, flexible and satisfying expression than the rough methods of ordinary speech care to compass. A higher adequacy of speech is its first object. Beyond this adequacy it may aim at a greater forcefulness and effectiveness by various devices of speech which are so many rhetorical means for heightening its force of intellectual appeal. Passing beyond this first limit, this just or strong, but always restraining measure, it may admit a more emphatic rhythm, more directly and powerfully stimulate the emotion, appeal to a more vivid aesthetic sense. It may even make such a free or rich use of images as to suggest an outward approximation to the manner of poetry ; but it employs them decoratively, as ornaments,

alankara, or for their effective value in giving a stronger intellectual vision of the thing or the thought it describes or defines ; it does not use the image for that profounder and more living vision for which the poet is always seeking. And always it has its eye on its chief hearer and judge, the intelligence, and calls in other powers only as important aids to capture his suffrage. Reason and taste, two powers of the intelligence, are rightly the supreme gods of the prose stylist, while to the poet they are only minor deities.

If it goes beyond these limits, approaches in its measures a more striking rhythmic balance, uses images for sheer vision, opens itself to a mightier breath of speech, prose style passes beyond its province and approaches or even enters the confines of poetry. It becomes poetical prose or even poetry itself using the apparent forms of prose as a disguise or a loose apparel. A high or a fine adequacy, effectivity, intellectual illuminativeness and a carefully tempered aesthetic satisfaction are the natural and normal powers of its speech. But the privilege of the poet is to go beyond and discover that more intense illumination of speech, that inspired word and supreme inevitable utterance, in which there meets the unity of a divine rhythmic movement with a depth of sense and a power of infinite suggestion welling up directly from the fountain-heads of the spirit within us. He may not always or often find it, but to seek for it is the law of his utterance, and when he can not only find it, but cast into it some deeply revealed truth of the spirit itself, he utters the *mantra*.

But always, whether in the search or the finding, the whole style and rhythm of poetry are the expression and movement which come from us out of a certain spiritual excitement caused by a vision in the soul of which it is eager to deliver itself. The vision may be of any thing in Nature or God or man or the life of creatures or the life of things ; it may be a vision of force and action, or of sensible beauty, or of truth of thought, or of emotion and pleasure and pain, of this life or the life beyond. It is sufficient that it is the soul which sees and the eye, sense, heart and thought-mind become the passive instruments of the soul. Then we get the real, the high poetry. But if it is too much an excitement of the intellect, the imagination, the emotions, the vital activities

seeking rhythmical and forceful expression which acts, without enough of the greater spiritual excitement embracing them, if all these are not sufficiently sunk into the soul, steeped in it, fused in it and the expression does not come out purified and uplifted by a sort of spiritual transmutation, then we fall to lower levels of poetry, and get work of a much more doubtful immortality. And when the appeal is altogether to the lower things in us, to the mere mind, we arrive outside the true domain of poetry ; we approach the confines of prose or get prose itself masking in the apparent forms of poetry, and the work is distinguished from prose style only or mainly by its mechanical elements, a good verse form and perhaps a more compact, catching or energetic expression than the prose writer will ordinarily permit to the easier and looser balance of his speech. That is to say, it will not have at all or not sufficiently the true essence of poetry.

For in all things that speech can express there are two elements, the outward or instrumental and the real or spiritual. In thought, for instance, there is the intellectual idea, that which the intelligence makes precise and definite to us, and the soul-idea, that which exceeds the intellectual and brings us into nearness or identity with the whole reality of the thing expressed. Equally in emotion, it is not the mere emotion itself the poet seeks, but the soul of the emotion, that in it for the delight of which the soul in us and the world desires or accepts emotional experience. So too with the poetical sense of objects, the poet's attempt to embody in his speech truth of life or truth of Nature. It is this greater truth and its delight and beauty for which he is seeking, beauty which is truth and truth beauty and therefore a joy for ever, because it brings us the delight of the soul in the discovery of its own deeper realities. This greater element the more timid and temperate speech of prose can sometimes shadow out to us, but the heightened and fearless style of poetry makes it close and living and the higher cadences of poetry carry in on their wings what the style by itself could not bring. This is the source of that intensity which is the stamp of poetical speech and of the poetical movement. It comes from the stress of the soul-vision behind the word ; it is the spiritual excitement of a rhythmic voyage of self-discovery among the magic islands of form and name in these inner and outer worlds.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XLI

THE ORIGIN OF THE IGNORANCE

How does this ignorance emerge or come into action in an absolute being who must be absolute consciousness and therefore cannot be subject to ignorance ? He cannot be ignorant of himself ; and since all things are himself, conscious modifications, determinations of his being, he cannot either be ignorant of things, of their true nature, of their true action. Yet though we say that we are That, that the Jivatman or individual self is no other than the Paramatman, no other than the Absolute, yet we are certainly ignorant both of ourselves and things, from which this contradiction results that what must be in its nature incapable of ignorance, is yet capable of it. We do not ease the difficulty by saying that Mind which is the seat of ignorance, is a thing of Maya, non-existent, not-Brahman, and that Brahman, the Absolute, the sole Existence cannot in any way be touched by the ignorance of a non-existent mind ; for we are only juggling with words in order to conceal from ourselves the fact that we are dividing and denying the unity of the Brahman ; for we have simply erected two opposite powers, Brahman incapable of illusion and self-illusive Maya, and pitchforked them into an impossible unity. If Brahman is the sole existence, Maya can be nothing but a power of Brahman, a force and a result of his being ; and if the Jivatman, one with Brahman,

is subject to its own Maya, the Brahman is subject to Maya.

We may get rid of the whole difficulty by saying that the Jivatman and the Supreme are not one, but eternally different, the one subject to ignorance, the other absolute in being and consciousness and therefore in knowledge ; but this contradicts the supreme experience which is that of unity in being, whatever difference there may be in the action of Nature. Or we may accept this fact of unity in difference and say that we are one, yet different, one in essential being and therefore in essential nature, different in soul-form and therefore in active nature. But we thereby only state the fact, leaving the difficulty unsolved, how that which belongs in being to the unity of the Absolute, and should therefore be one with it and with all in consciousness, comes to be divided in fact and therefore subject to ignorance. Or we may escape the difficulty by saying that beyond existence and its problems there is the Unknowable which is beyond our experience, and that the action of Maya has already begun in the unknowable before the world began and therefore is itself unknowable and inexplicable in its cause and its origin. This would be a sort of idealistic as opposed to a materialistic Agnosticism. But all Agnosticism is subject to this objection that it may be nothing but our refusal to know, a too ready embracing of an apparent limitation, a sense of impotence which may be permitted to the present limitations of the mind, but not to the Jivatman who is one with the Supreme. The Supreme must surely know himself and the cause of ignorance, and therefore the Jivatman ought not to despair of knowledge or deny his capacity of knowing the Supreme and knowing the cause of his own present ignorance.

The Unknowable, if it is at all, may be a supreme state of Sachchidananda beyond our highest conceptions of existence, consciousness and bliss, and that is what was evidently meant both by the Asat, the Non-Existent of

the Taittiriya Upanishad, which alone was in the beginning and out of which the existent was born, and by the Nirvana of Buddha ; for in both the reaching to the highest state is said to result beyond self in an ineffable and unconditioned bliss. This is the sense in which we have already accepted it ; our acceptation simply means a refusal to put a limit to the ascension of the Infinite. Or, if it is not this, if it is something quite different from existence, it must be the absolute Non-existence of the nihilistic thinker. But out of absolute Nothingness nothing can come, not even anything merely apparent, not even an illusion ; and if the absolute Non-existence is not that, then it can only be an absolute eternally unrealised Potentiality out of which infinite potentialities may at any time emerge, but out of which only some actually succeed in emerging. Out of this Non-existence anything may arise, and there is no possibility of saying what or why ; it is for all practical purposes a seed of absolute chaos out of which by some happy accident there has emerged the order of a universe. Or we may say that there is no real order of the universe ; what we take for such is a persistent habit of the senses and the life and a figment of the mind. Out of an absolute chaos all paradox and absurdity can be born, and the world is a mysterious sum of contraries and paradoxes, in effect, as Schopenhauer thought, a huge error, a monstrous, an infinite delirium. Of such a universe not an absolute consciousness and knowledge, but an absolute Inconscience and Ignorance may be the source. Anything may be true in such a cosmos ; everything may have been born out of nothing ; thinking mind may be only a disease of unthinking Force or inconscient Matter ; dominant order, which we suppose to be existence accordy to the truth of things, may be really the mechanical law of an eternal self-ignorance and not the self-evolution of a supreme, self-ruling conscious Will ; perpetual existence may be the constant phenomenon of an

eternal Nihil; all opinions about the origins of things become of an equal force, since all are equally valid or invalid, all being equally possible where there is no sure starting-point and no ascertainable goal. All these opinions have been held by the human mind and in all there has been profit, even if we regard them as errors; for errors are permitted to the mind because they open doors upon truth, negatively by destroying opposite errors, positively by preparing for a new constructive hypothesis. But pushed too far, this view of things leads to the negation of the whole aim of philosophy, which seeks for knowledge and not for chaos and which cannot fulfil itself if the last world of knowledge is the Unknowable, but only if it is something, in the words of the Upanishad, which being known all is known. The Unknowable—not absolutely unknowable, but beyond us only,—can only be a higher degree in the intensity of being of that something, and, if it were known, it would not destroy entirely what is given us by our supreme possible knowledge, but rather carry it to a higher fulfilment and larger truth of what it has already gained.

This Something is, as Vedanta insists and as we have throughout insisted, in its nature Sachchidananda, a trinity of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss. But its absolute consciousness is in its nature absolute power, the nature of Chit is Shakti; and the action of this power we call Tapas, by which we mean the power dwelling upon itself and bringing out, as it were by the heat of its incubation,* the seed and development of all that is within itself,—or, to use a language convenient to our minds,

* Tapas means literally heat, afterwards any kind of energism, askesis, austerity of conscious force acting upon itself or its object. The world was created by Tapas in the form, says the Vedic image, of an egg, which being broken, again by Tapas, heat of incubation of conscious force, the Purusha emerged, Soul in Nature, like a bird from the egg.

of all its truths and potentialities. If we examine our own consciousness, we shall see that this power of its energy applying itself to its object is really the one positive force it has ; by that it arrives at all its knowledge and its action and its creation. But for us there are two objects, ourselves, the internal world, and others, whether creatures or things, the external world. To Sachchidananda this distinction with all its effective and operative consequences does not apply in the same way as for us, because all is himself and within himself and there is no such separative division as we make by the limitations of our mind. Secondly, in us only a part of the conscious force is identified with our voluntary action, our will, the rest is to us involuntary or sub-conscious or superconscious, and from this division also a great number of important practical consequences emerge ; but in Sachchidananda this division also and its consequences do not apply, since all is his one indivisible self and all action and result are his one indivisible will. Tapas is the nature of his consciousness as of ours, only it is the integral Tapas of an integral consciousness in an indivisible Existence.

But here arises another question. In ourselves we habitually associate our tapas, our conscious force, with active consciousness, with energy in play and in act and in motion. That which is passive in us produces only an involuntary action which we do not associate with our will or conscious force ; still since there is action or the possibility of action, there is at least a passively responsive conscious force, there is either a secretly positive or a negative and inverse Tapas. But beyond this we find that we have the power to arrive at what seems to us an absolute passivity in which, we say, we cease from all mental and physical activity. There would seem, then, to be an active consciousness, in which consciousness works as a force throwing up knowledge and activity out of itself and of which therefore Tapas is the character, and a pas-

sive consciousness in which consciousness does not act as a force, but only exists as a status and of which therefore absence of Tapas is the character. Is there such an effective distinction in Sachchidananda? It is affirmed that there is; that is indeed one of the most important and fruitful distinctions in Indian philosophy; it is besides a fact of spiritual experience. Let us observe, however, first, that by this passivity in ourselves we arrive from particular and broken knowledge at a greater, a one and a unifying knowledge. Secondly, that if, in the state of passivity, we open ourselves entirely to what is beyond us, we become aware of a Tapas acting upon us which we feel to be not our own in the limited egoistic sense, but universal or transcendental, and that this power works through us, for a greater play of knowledge, a greater play of energy, action and result, which also we feel to be not our own, but that of the Divine, of Sachchidananda, ourselves only its field or channel. The result happens in both cases because our individual consciousness rests from ignorant, limited action and opens itself to the supreme status and the supreme action. In the latter case there is power and play of knowledge and action, and that is Tapas; but in the former also, in the static consciousness, there is evidently a power for knowledge and a result of knowledge, and that too is Tapas. Therefore it would seem that Tapas is the character of both the passive and the active consciousness of Brahman, and that our own passivity also has a certain character of Tapas.

But still, it may be said, they are in the end two different things, and this is shown by their difference of opposite results, because resort to the passivity of Brahman leads to the cessation of this existence and resort to the active Brahman leads to its continuance. Let us observe, however, that this distinction arises only by a movement of the individual soul from one poise to another, from the poise of Brahman-consciousness in the world, where it is

a fulcrum for the universal action, to the poise of Brahman-consciousness beyond the world, where it is a power for the withholding of energy from the universal action. Moreover, if it is by energy of Tapas that the dispensing of force of being in the world-action is accomplished, it is equally by the energy of Tapas that the drawing back of that force of being is accomplished. The passive consciousness of Brahman and its active consciousness are not two different, conflicting and incompatible things; they are the same consciousness, the same energy, at one end in a state of self-reservation, at the other cast into a motion of self-giving and self-deploying, like the stillness of a reservoir and the coursing of the channels which flow from it. In fact, behind every activity there is and must be a passive power of being from which it arises, by which it is supported, which even, we see in the end, governs it from behind without being totally identified with it, in the sense at least of being itself all poured out into action and indistinguishable from it. No action exhausts the power from which it proceeds, leaving nothing behind it in reserve. When we get back into our own conscious being, when we stand back from our own action and see how it is done, we see that it is our whole being which stands behind any particular act or sum of activities, passive in the rest of its integrality, active in its limited dispensation of energy; but that passivity is not an inertia, it is a poise of self-reserved energy.

It is immaterial for the moment to inquire whether the passivity out of which all emerges is absolute or only relative to the observable action from which it holds back. It is enough to note that, though we make the distinction for the convenience of our minds, there is not a passive Brahman and an active Brahman, but one Brahman who reserves his Tapas in what we call passivity and gives himself in what we call his activity. For the purposes of action, they are two poles; the action proceeds on its cir-

cuit from the reservation and returns to it, presumably, the energies that were derived, to be again thrown out in a fresh circuit. The passivity of Brahman is Tapas of his being dwelling upon itself in a self-absorbed concentration of his immobile energy ; the activity is Tapas of his being releasing out of that incubation what it held into mobility and travelling in a million waves of action, dwelling still upon each as it travels and liberating its truths and potentialities. There too is a concentration of force, but a multiple concentration, which seems to us a diffusion. But it is not really a diffusion, but a deploying ; Brahman does not cast his energy out of himself to be lost in some unreal exterior void, but keeps it at work within his being, conserving it unabridged and undiminished in all its continual process of conversion and transmutation. The passivity is a great conservation of Tapas supporting a manifold initiation of movement and transmutation into forms ; the activity is a conservation of Tapas in the movement and transmutation. As in ourselves, so in Brahman, both are relative to each other, both simultaneously coexist, pole and pole in the action of one Existence.

Brahman then is neither a passivity, nor an activity, nor an alternation in Time between these two things. Neither in fact is an absolute truth of his being ; their opposition is only true of him in relation to the activities of his consciousness. When we speak of his deployment of the conscious energy of his being in the universal action, we speak of him as the active Brahman, when we speak of his simultaneous reservation of the conscious energy of his being kept back from the action, we speak of him as the passive Brahman, Akshara and Kshara ; otherwise the terms have no meaning. In the ordinary view of the soul's evolution into the action, *pravritti*, and its involution into the passivity, *nivritti*, it is supposed that in the action the individual soul becomes ignorant, nescient of its passive which is supposed to be its true being, and

in the passivity it becomes finally nescient of its active which is supposed to be its false being. But this is because these two movements take place alternately, as in our sleep and waking; we pass in waking into nescience of our sleeping condition, in sleep into nescience of our waking being. But this happens because only part of our being performs this alternative movement and we falsely think of ourselves as only that partial existence; but we know now by more psychological experience that the larger Being in us is perfectly aware of all that happens even in what is to our partial and superficial being a state of unconsciousness. It is limited neither by sleep nor by waking. So it is in our relations with Brahman who is our real being. In the ignorance we identify ourselves with only a partial consciousness which becomes nescient of its self of status by movement and loses its hold on its self of action by entering into passivity. By passivity it falls asleep, and this sleep is called liberation; but though it is a liberation from the ignorance of the partial being in its flux of action, it is earned by putting on the opposite ignorance of the same partial being when it becomes on the contrary incapable of active consciousness; it is not the real liberation into our true and integral being, which is that of Brahman.

For Brahman does not pass alternately from passivity to activity and back to passivity by cessation of *pravritti*. If that were really true of the integral Being, then, while the universe continued, there would be no passive Brahman in existence, all would be action, just as it is supposed that when our universe is dissolved, there is no active Brahman, all becomes cessation and immobile stillness. Nor would we be able then to become aware, as we are able, of an eternal passivity and self-concentrated calm behind all the activity and all the multiply concentrated movement; for so long as any activity continued, that would not exist. Integral Brahman possesses both the

passivity and the activity simultaneously and does not pass alternately from one to the other as from sleep to waking ; it is only some partial activity in him which seems to do that, and we by identifying ourselves with that partial activity have simply the appearance of this alternation from one nescience to another ; but our true, our integral being is not subject to these opposites. When therefore we get the true knowledge and the true liberation free from the disabilities of the restricted partial and ignorant being, we too shall possess the passivity and the activity with a simultaneous possession, exceeding both these poles of the universality, limited by neither of them.

The Supreme, as the Gita points out, exceeds both the immobile self and the mobile being ; put together even, they do not represent all he is. For obviously we do not mean, when we speak of his possessing them simultaneously, that he is the sum of a passivity and an activity, an integer made of those two fractions, passive with three fourths of himself, active with one fourth. In that case, Brahman might be a sum of two nesciences, the passive three fourths not only indifferent to, but quite ignorant of all that the activity is doing, the active one fourth quite unaware of the passivity and unable to possess it except by ceasing from action. And even, Brahman the sum might amount to something quite different from his two fractions, something, as it were, up and aloof, ignorant of and irresponsible for anything which some mystic Maya was at once obstinately doing and rigidly abstaining from doing in the two fractions of his existence. But it is clear that Brahman must be aware both of his passivity and his activity and regard them not as his absolute being, but as opposite, yet mutually satisfying terms of his universalities. For it is not true that Brahman in his passivity, is ignorant and unaware of his own activities ; rather he contains them in himself, supports them with his eternal power of calm, initiates them from

his eternal poise of energy. It is equally untrue that Brahman in his activity is ignorant of his passivity, but rather he is perfectly aware of it supporting his actions, possesses it always in the heart of his movement and by it is eternally free and blissful in all the whirl of his energies. Nor in either is he unaware of his absolute being, but knows that all he expresses through them draws its value and power from the power of that absolute conscious existence.

We arrive then at this important first result that the Ignorance has not its starting-point in the absolute Brahman or in integral Sachchidananda, but belongs only to a partial action of his being with which we identify ourselves, just as in the body we identify ourselves with that partial and superficial consciousness which alternates between waking and sleep. Ignorance is not an element or power proper to the absolute nature of the Brahman or to his integrality. Maya is not ignorance, but a transcendent and universal power of self-knowledge and all-knowledge, and ignorance can only intervene as a minor and subsequent movement, partial and relative. Is it then something inherent in the multiplicity of souls ? Does it come into being immediately Brahman views himself in the multiplicity, and does that multiplicity consist of a sum of souls each in its very nature fractional and divided from all the others in consciousness, unable to become aware of them at all except as things external to it, linked at most by communication from body to body or mind to mind, but incapable of unity ? But that is only what we seem to be in our most superficial layer of consciousness, the physical ; when we get back into subtler, deeper, larger actions of our consciousness, we find the walls of division becoming progressively thinner and thinner.

Body is the sign and basis of the apparent division which Nature plunging into ignorance and self-nescience makes the starting-point for the recovery of unity by the

individual soul even in the midst of the most exaggerated forms of her multiple consciousness. Bodies cannot communicate with each other except by externality ; cannot penetrate each other except by division of the penetrated body or by taking advantage of some gap in it, some pre-existent division ; cannot unite except by a breaking up and devouring, a swallowing and absorption and so an assimilation, or at most a fusion in which both forms disappear. Mind too, when identified with body, is hampered by its limitations ; but in itself it is more subtle and two minds can penetrate each other without hurt or division, can interchange their substance without mutual injury, can in a way become parts of each other. When we get back to soul-consciousness, the obstacles to unity lessen and finally cease to exist. The soul can in its consciousness identify itself with other souls, can contain them and enter into and be contained by them, can realise its unity with them ; and this can take place not only in a featureless and indistinguishable sleep or Nirvana in which all distinctions and individualities of soul and mind and body are lost, but in a perfect waking which observes and takes account of all distinctions but exceeds them.

Therefore ignorance and self-limiting division are not inherent and insuperable in the multiplicity of souls, are not the very nature of the multiplicity of Brahman. Brahman, as he exceeds the passivity and the activity, so exceeds the unity and multiplicity. He is one in himself, but not with a self-limiting unity exclusive of the power of multiplicity, such as is the separated unity of the body and the mind ; he is not the mathematical integer one which is incapable of containing the hundred and therefore less than the hundred. He contains the hundred, is one in all the hundred. One in himself, he is one in the many and the many are one in him. In other words, Brahman in his unity of spirit is aware of his multiplicity

of souls and in the consciousness of his multiple souls is aware of the unity of all souls. In each soul he, the immanent spirit, the Lord in each heart, is aware of his oneness. The Jivatman illumined by him, aware of its unity with the One, is also aware of its unity with the many. Only our superficial consciousness, identified with body and with divided life and dividing mind, is ignorant; but that also can be illumined and made aware. Multiplicity, then, is not the necessary cause of the ignorance.

Ignorance, as we have already said, comes in at a later stage, as a later movement, when the individual consciousness in the many identifies itself by dividing mind with the form, which is the only safe basis of division. But what is the form? It is, we have seen, merely a knot of the force of consciousness in its movement, a knot maintained in being by a constant whirl of action, but not in any part of itself durable or eternal. It is not eternal in its integrality, nor in its constituting atoms; for they can be disintegrated by dissolving the knot of energy in constant concentrated action which is the sole thing that maintains their apparent stability. It is a concentration of Tapas in movement of force on the form which makes the physical basis of division. But all things in the activity are, we have seen, a concentration of Tapas in movement of force upon its object. Must not then the origin of ignorance be some self-absorbed concentration of Tapas or conscious force in each separate movement of its force, which to us takes the appearance of mind identifying itself with the separate movement and with the form resulting from it? It is here that we must look for the secret of the apparent ignorance of the embodied mental being as well as of the great apparent inconscience of physical Nature. We have to ask ourselves what is the nature of this absorbing, this separating, this self-forgetful concentration which is the great miracle of the physical universe.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XXXIX

HATHAYOGA

There are almost as many ways of arriving at Samadhi as there are different paths of Yoga. Indeed so great is the importance attached to it, not only as a supreme means of arriving at the highest consciousness, but as the very condition and status of that highest consciousness itself, in which alone it can be completely possessed and enjoyed while we are in the body, that certain disciplines of Yoga look as if they were only ways of arriving at Samadhi. All Yoga is in its nature an attempt and an arriving at unity with the Supreme,—unity with the being of the Supreme, unity with the consciousness of the Supreme, unity with the bliss of the Supreme,—or, if we repudiate the idea of absolute unity, at least at some kind of union, even if it be only for the soul to live in one status and periphery of being with the Divine, *sálókya*, or in a sort of indivisible proximity, *sâmīpya*. This can only be gained by rising to a higher level and intensity of consciousness than our ordinary mentality possesses. Samadhi, as we have seen, offers itself as the natural status of such a higher level and greater intensity. It assumes naturally a great importance in the Yoga of knowledge, because there it is the very principle of its

method and its object to raise the mental consciousness into a clarity and concentrated power by which it can become entirely aware of, lost in, identified with true being. But there are two great disciplines in which it becomes of an even greater importance. To these two systems, to Raja-yoga and Hathayoga, we may as well now turn ; for in spite of the wide difference of their methods from that of the path of knowledge, they have this same principle as their final justification. At the same-time, it will not be necessary for us to do more than regard the spirit of their gradations in passing ; for in a synthetic and integral Yoga they take a secondary importance ; their aims have indeed to be included, but their methods can either altogether be dispensed with or used only for a preliminary or else a casual assistance.

Hathayoga is a powerful, but difficult and onerous system whose whole principle of action is founded on an intimate connection between the body and the soul. The body is the key, the body the secret both of bondage and of release, of animal weakness and of divine power, of the obscuration of the mind and soul and of their illumination, of subjection to pain and limitation and of self-mastery, of death and of immortality. The body is not to the Hathayogin a mere mass of living matter, but a mystic bridge between the spiritual and the physical being ; one has even seen an ingenious exegete of the Hathayogic discipline explain the Vedantic symbol OM as a figure of this mystic human body. Although, however, he speaks always of the physical body and makes that the basis of his practices, he does not view it with the eye of the anatomist or physiologist, but describes and explains it in language which always looks back to the subtle body behind the physical system. In fact the whole aim of the the Hathayogin may be summarised from our point of view, though he would not himself put it in that language, as an attempt by fixed scientific processes to

give to the soul in the physical body the power, the light, the purity, the freedom, the ascending scales of spiritual experience which would naturally be open to it, if it dwelt here in the subtle and the developed causal vehicle.

To speak of the processes of Hathayoga as scientific may seem strange to those who associate the idea of science only with the superficial phenomena of the physical universe apart from all that is behind them ; but they are equally based on definite experience of laws and their workings and give, when rightly practised, their well-tested results. In fact, Hathayoga is, in its own way, a system of knowledge ; but while the proper Yoga of knowledge is a philosophy of being put into spiritual practice, a psychological system, this is a science of being, a psycho-physical system. Both produce physical, psychic and spiritual results ; but because they stand at different poles of the same truth, to one the psycho-physical results are of small importance, the pure psychic and spiritual alone matter, and even the pure psychic are only accessories of the spiritual which absorb all the attention ; in the other the physical is of immense importance, the psychical a considerable fruit, the spiritual the highest and consummating result, but it seems for a long time a thing postponed and remote, so great and absorbing is the attention which the body demands. It must not be forgotten, however, that both do arrive at the same end. Hathayoga, also, is a path, though by a long, difficult and meticulous movement, *duhkham âptum*, to the Supreme.

All Yoga proceeds in its method by three principles of practice ; first, purification, that is to say, the removal of all aberrations, disorders, obstructions brought about by the mixed and irregular action of the energy of being in our physical, moral and mental system ; secondly, concentration, that is to say, the bringing to its full intensity and the mastered and self-directed employment of that energy of being in us for a definite end ; thirdly,

liberation, that is to say, the release of our being from the narrow and painful knots of the individualised energy in a false and limited play, which at present are the law of our nature. The enjoyment of our liberated being which brings us into unity or union with the Supreme, is the consummation ; it is that for which Yoga is done. Three indispensable steps and the high, open and infinite levels to which they mount ; and in all its practice Hathayoga keeps these in view.

The two main members of its physical discipline, to which the others are mere accessories, are *âsana*, the habituating of the body to certain attitudes of immobility, and *prânâyâma*, the regulated direction and arrestation by exercises of breathing of the vital currents of energy in the body. The physical being is the instrument ; but the physical being is made up of two elements, the physical and the vital, the body which is the apparent instrument and the basis, and the life energy, *prâna*, which is the power and the real instrument. Both of these instruments are now our masters. We are subject to the body, we are subject to the life energy ; it is only in a very limited degree that we can, though souls, though mental beings, at all pose as their masters. We are bound by a poor and limited physical nature, we are bound consequently by a poor and limited life-power which is all that the body can bear or to which it can give scope. Moreover, the action of each and both in us is subject not only to the narrowest limitations, but to a constant impurity, which renews itself every time it is rectified, and to all sorts of disorders, some of which are normal, a violent order, part of our ordinary physical life, others abnormal, its maladies and disturbances. With all this Hathayoga has to deal ; all this it has to overcome ; and it does it mainly by these two methods, complex and cumbrous in action, but simple in principle and effective.

The Hathayogic system of Asana has at its basis two

profound ideas which bring with them many effective implications. The first is that of control by physical immobility, the second is that of power by immobility. The power of physical immobility is as important in Hatha-yoga as the power of mental immobility in the Yoga of knowledge, and for parallel reasons. To the mind unaccustomed to the deeper truths of our being and nature they would both seem to be a seeking after the listless passivity of inertia. The direct contrary is the truth ; for Yogic passivity, whether of mind or body, is a condition of the greatest increase, possession and continence of energy. The normal activity of our minds is for the most part a disordered restlessness, full of waste and rapidly tentative expenditure of energy in which only a little is selected for the workings of the self-mastering will,—waste, be it understood, from this point of view, not that of universal Nature in which what is to us waste, serves the purposes of her economy. The activity of our bodies is a similar restlessness.

It is the sign of a constant inability of the body to hold even the limited life energy that enters into or is generated in it, and consequently of a general dissipation of this Pranic force with a quite subordinate element of ordered and well-economised activity. Moreover in the consequent interchange and balancing between the movement and interaction of the vital energies normally at work in the body and their interchange with those which act upon it from outside, whether the energies of others or of the general Pranic force variously active in the environment, there is a constant precarious balancing and adjustment which may at any moment go wrong. Every obstruction, every defect, every excess, every lesion creates impurities and disorders. Nature manages it all well enough for her own purposes, when left to herself ; but the moment the blundering mind and will of the human being interfere with her habits and her vital instincts and intuitions, especially

when they create false or artificial habits, a still more precarious order and frequent derangement become the rule of the being. Yet this interference is inevitable, since man lives not for the purposes of the vital Nature in him alone, but for higher purposes which she had not contemplated in her first balance and to which she has with difficulty to adjust her operations. Therefore the first necessity of a greater status or action is to get rid of this disordered restlessness, to still the activity and to regulate it. The Hathayogin has to bring about an abnormal poise of status and action of the body and the life energy, abnormal not in the direction of greater disorder, but of superiority and self-mastery.

The first object of the immobility of the Asana is to get rid of the restlessness imposed on the body and to force it to hold the Pranic energy instead of dissipating and squandering it. The experience in the practice of Asana is not that of a cessation and diminution of energy by inertia, but of a great increase, impouring, circulation of force. The body, accustomed to work off superfluous energy by movement, is at first ill able to bear this increase and this retained inner action and betrays it by violent tremblings ; afterwards it habituates itself and, when the Asana is conquered, then it finds as much ease in the posture, however originally difficult or unusual to it, as in its easiest attitudes sedentary or recumbent. It becomes increasingly capable of holding whatever amount of increased vital energy is brought to bear upon it without needing to spill it out in movement, and this increase is so enormous as to seem infinite, so that the body of the perfected Hathayogin is capable of feats of endurance, force, unfatigued expenditure of energy of which the normal physical powers of man at their highest would be incapable. For it is not only able to hold and retain this energy, but to bear its possession of the physical system and its more complete movement through it. The life

energy, thus occupying and operating in a powerful, unified movement on the tranquil and passive body, freed from the restless balancing between the continent power and the contained, becomes a much greater and more effective force. In fact, it seems then rather to contain and possess and use the body than to be contained, possessed and used by it,—just as the restless active mind seems to seize on and use irregularly and imperfectly whatever spiritual force comes into it, but the tranquilised mind is held, possessed and used by the spiritual force.

The body, thus liberated from itself, purified from many of its disorders and irregularities, becomes, partly by Asana, completely by combined Asana and Pranayama, a perfected instrument. It is freed from its ready liability to fatigue ; it acquires an immense power of health ; its tendencies of decay, age and death are arrested. The Hathayogin even at an age advanced beyond the ordinary span maintains the unimpaired vigour, health and youth of the life in the body ; even the appearance of physical youth is sustained for a longer time. He has a much greater power of longevity, and from his point of view, the body being the instrument, it is a matter of no small importance to preserve it long and to keep it for all that time free from impairing deficiencies. It is to be observed, also, that there are an enormous variety of Asanas in Hathayoga, running in their fullness beyond the number of eighty, some of them of the most complicated and difficult character. This variety serves partly to increase the results already noted, as well as to give a greater freedom and flexibility to the use of the body, but it serves also to alter the relation of the physical energy in the body to the earth energy with which it is related. The lightening of the heavy hold of the latter, of which the overcoming of fatigue is the first sign and the phenomenon of *utthâpana* or partial levitation the last, is one

result. The gross body begins to acquire something of the nature of the subtle body and to possess something of its relations with the life-energy ; that becomes a greater force more powerfully felt and yet capable of a lighter and freer and more resolvable physical action, powers which culminate in the Hathayogic *siddhis* or extraordinary powers of *garimâ*, *mahimâ*, *animâ* and *laghimâ*. Moreover, the life ceases to be entirely dependent on the action of the physical organs and functionings, such as the heart-beats and the breathing. These can in the end be suspended without cessation of or lesion to the life.

All this, however, the result in its perfection of Asana and Pranayama, is only a basic physical power and freedom. The higher use of Hathayoga depends more intimately on Pranayama. Asana deals more directly with the more material part of the physical totality, though here too it needs the aid of the other ; Pranayama, starting from the physical immobility and self-holding which is secured by Asana, deals more directly with the subtler vital parts, the nervous system. This is done by various regulations of the breathing, starting from equality of respiration and inspiration and extending to the most diverse rhythmic regulations of both with an interval of inholding of the breath. In the end the keeping in of the breath, which has first to be done with some effort, and even its cessation become as easy and seem as natural as the constant taking in and throwing out which is its normal action. But the first objects of the Pranayama are to purify the nervous system, to circulate the life-energy through all the nerves without obstruction, disorder or irregularity, and to acquire a complete control of its functionings, so that the mind and will of the soul inhabiting the body may be no longer subject to the body or life or their combined limitations. The power of these exercises of breathing to bring about a purified and unobstructed state of the nervous system is a known and

well-established fact of our physiology. It helps also to clear the physical system, but is not entirely effective at first on all its canals and openings ; therefore the Hatha-gin uses supplementary physical methods for clearing them out regularly of all their accumulations. The combination of these with Asana,—particular Asanas have even an effect in destroying particular diseases,—and with Pranayama maintain perfectly the health of the body. But the principal gain is that by this purification the vital energy can be directed anywhere, to any part of the body and in any way or with any rhythm of its movement.

The mere function of breathing into and out of the lungs is only the most sensible, outward and seizable movement of the Prana, the Breath of Life in our physical system. The Prana has according to Yogic science a fivefold movement pervading all the nervous system and the whole material body and determining all its functionings. The Hathayogin seizes on the outward movement of respiration as a sort of key which opens to him the control of all these five powers of the Prana. He becomes sensibly aware of their inner operations, mentally conscious of his whole physical life and action. He is able to direct the Prana through all the *nadis* or nerve-channels of his system. He becomes aware of its action in the six *chakras* or ganglionic centres of the nervous system, and is able to open it up in each beyond its present limited, habitual and mechanical workings. He gets, in short, a perfect control of the life in the body in its most subtle nervous as well as in its grossest physical aspects, even over that in it which is at present involuntary and out of the reach of our observing consciousness and will. Thus a complete mastery of the body and the life and a free and effective use of them established upon a purification of their workings is founded as a basis for the higher aims of Hathayoga.

All this, however, is still a mere basis, the outward

and inward physical conditions of the two instruments used by Hathayoga. There still remains the more important matter of the psychical and spiritual effects to which they can be turned. This depends on the connection between the body and the mind and spirit and between the gross and the subtle body on which the system of Hathayoga takes its stand. Here it comes into line with Rajayoga, and a point is reached at which a transition from the one to the other can be made.

Essays on the Gita

EQUALITY

Knowledge, desirelessness, impersonality, equality, the inner self-existent peace and bliss, freedom from or at least superiority to the tangled interlocking of the three modes of Nature, are the signs of the liberated soul, and they accompany it in all its activities. They are the condition of that unalterable calm which this soul preserves in all the movement, all the shock, all the clash of forces which surround it in the world. They are the equable immutability of the Brahman in the midst of all mutations ; they belong to that indivisible and impartial Oneness which is for ever immanent in all the multiplicities of the universe. Equal and all-equalising is that Oneness in the midst of the million differences and inequalities of the world ; and equality of the spirit is the sole real equality ; for in all else in existence there can only be similarity and balance, but even in the greatest similarities of the world we find difference of inequality and difference of unlikeness and the balancings of the world can only come about by a poising of combined unequal weights.

Hence the immense importance attached by the Gita in its elements of Karmayaga to equality ; it is the nodus of the free spirit's free relations with the world. Knowledge, desirelessness, impersonality, bliss, freedom from the modes of Nature, when withdrawn into themselves, self-absorbed,

inactive, have no need of equality ; for they take no cognizance of the things in which the opposition of equality and inequality arises. But the moment the spirit takes cognizance of and deals with the multiplicities, personalities, differences, inequalities of the action of Nature, it has to effectuate these other signs of its free status by this one manifesting sign of equality. Knowledge is the consciousness of unity with the One ; and in relation with the many different beings and existences of the universe it must show itself by an equal oneness with all. Impersonality is the one immutable spirit's superiority to the variations of its multiple personality in the world ; in its dealings with the personalities of the universe it must show itself in the equal and impartial spirit of its action with regard to all, however various that action may be made by the variety of relations into which it is moulded or of the conditions under which it has to take place. Desirelessness is the illimitable spirit's superiority to the limiting attraction of the separate objects of desire in the world ; when it has to enter into relations with those objects, it must show it either by an equal and impartial indifference in their possession or by an equal and impartial unattached delight in all and love for all which, because it is self-existent, does not depend upon possession or non-possession, but is in its essence unperturbed and immutable. For the spirit's bliss is in itself, and if this bliss is to enter into relations with things and creatures, it is only in this way that it can manifest its free spirituality. *Traigunatītya* is the unperturbed spirit's superiority to that action of the modes of Nature which is in its very nature perturbed and unequal ; if it has to enter into relations with the conflicting and unequal activities of Nature, if the free soul is to allow its nature any action at all, it must show its superiority by an impartial equality towards all activities, results or happenings.

Equality is the sign and also for the aspirant the test,

Where there is inequality in the soul, there there is in evidence some unequal play of the modes of Nature, motion of desire, play of personal will, feeling and action, activity of joy and grief or that disturbed and disturbing delight which is not true spiritual bliss, but a mental satisfaction bringing in its train inevitably a counterpart or recoil of mental dissatisfaction. Where there is inequality of soul, there there is deviation from knowledge, loss of steadfast abiding in the all-embracing and all-reconciling oneness of the Brahman and unity of things. By his equality the Karmayogin knows in the midst of his action that he is free.

It is this spiritual nature, this high and universal character of the equality enjoined which gives its distinctive note to the teaching of the Gita in this matter. For otherwise the mere teaching of equality in itself as the most desirable status of the mind, feelings and temperament in which we rise superior to human weakness, is by no means peculiar to the Gita; equality has always been held up to admiration as the philosophic ideal and the characteristic temperament of the sages. The Gita takes up indeed this philosophic ideal, but carries it far beyond into a higher region where we find ourselves breathing a larger and purer air. The Stoic poise, the philosophic poise of the soul are only its first and second steps of ascension out of the whirl of the passions and the tossings of desire to a serenity and bliss, not of the Gods, but of the Divine himself in his supreme self-mastery. The Stoic equality making character its pivot founds itself upon self-mastery by endurance; the happier and serener philosophic equality prefers self-mastery by knowledge, by detachment, by a high intellectual indifference seated above the disturbances to which our nature is prone, *udasînavad âsînah*, as the Gita expresses it; there is also the religious or Christian equality which is a perpetual kneeling or a prostrate resignation and submission to the will of God.

These are the three steps and means towards divine peace, heroic endurance, sage indifference, pious resignation, *titikshâ, udâśīnata, namas* or *uati*. The Gita takes them all in its large synthetic manner and weaves them into its upward soul-movement, but it gives to each a profounder root, a larger outlook, a more universal and transcendent significance. For to each it gives the values of the spirit, its power of spiritual being beyond the character, beyond the understanding, beyond the emotions.

The ordinary human soul takes a pleasure in the customary disturbances of its nature-life ; it is because it has this pleasure and because, having it, it gives a sanction to the troubled play of the lower nature that the play continues perpetually ; for the Prakriti does nothing except for the pleasure and with the sanction of its lover and enjoyer, the Purusha. We do not recognize this truth because under the actual stroke of the adverse disturbance, smitten by grief, pain, discomfort, misfortune, failure, defeat, blame, dishonour, the mind shrinks back from the blow, while it leaps eagerly to embrace the opposite and pleasurable disturbances, joy, pleasure, satisfactions of all kinds, prosperity, success, victory, glory, praise ; but this does not alter the truth of the soul's pleasure in life which remains constant behind the dualities of the mind. The warrior does not feel physical pleasure in his wounds or find mental satisfaction in his defeats ; but he has a complete delight in the godhead of battle which brings to him defeat and wounds as well as the joy of victory, and he accepts the chances of the former and the hope of the latter as part of the mingled web of war, the thing which the delight in him pursues. Even wounds bring him a joy and pride in memory complete when the pain of them has passed, but often enough present even while it is there and fed by the pain. Defeat has for him the joy and pride of indomitable resistance to a superior adversary, or, if he is of a baser kind, the passions of hatred and revenge

which also have their darker and crueller pleasures. So it is with the pleasure of the soul in the normal play of our life.

The mind recoils by pain and dislike from the adverse strokes of life ; that is Nature's device for enforcing a principle of self-protection, *jugupsa*, so that the vulnerable nervous and bodily parts of us may not unduly rush upon self-destruction to embrace it: it takes joy in the favourable touches of life ; that is Nature's lure of rajasic pleasure, so that the force in the creature may overcome the tamasic tendencies of inertia and inactivity and be impelled fully towards action, desire, struggle, success, and by its attachment to these things her ends may be worked out. Our secret soul takes a pleasure in this strife and effort and even in adversity and suffering, which can be complete enough in memory and retrospect, but is present behind and often rises even to the surface of the afflicted mind to support it in its passion ; but what really attracts the soul is the whole mingled, weft of the thing we call life with all its disturbance of struggle and seeking, its attractions and repulsions, its offer and its menace, its varieties of every kind. To the rajasic desire-soul in us a monotonous pleasure, success without struggle, joy without a shadow must after a time become fatiguing, insipid, cloying ; it needs a background of darkness to give full value to its enjoyment of light : for the happiness it seeks and enjoys, is of that very nature, it is in its very essence relative and dependent on the perception and experience of its opposite. The joy of the soul in the dualities is the secret of the mind's pleasure in living.

Ask it to rise out of all this disturbance to the unmingled joy of the pure bliss-soul which supports its struggle and makes its own continued existence possible, —it will draw back at once from the call. It does not believe in such an existence ; or it believes that it would not be life, that it would not be at all the varied existence

in the world around it in which it is accustomed to take pleasure ; it would be something tasteless and without savour. Or it feels that the effort would be too difficult for it ; it recoils from the struggle of the ascent, although in reality the spiritual change is not at all more difficult than the realisation of the dreams the desire-soul pursues, nor entails more struggle and labour in the attainment than the tremendous effort which the desire-soul expends in its passionate chase after its own transient objects of pleasure and desire. The true cause of its unwillingness is that it is asked to rise above its own atmosphere and breathe a rarer and purer air of life, whose bliss and power it cannot realise and hardly even conceives as real, while the joy of this lower turbid nature is to it the one thing familiar and palpable. Nor is this lower satisfaction in itself a thing evil and unprofitable ; it is rather the condition for the upward evolution of our human nature out of the tamasic ignorance and inertia to which its material being is most subject ; it is the rajasic stage of the graded ascent of man towards the supreme self-knowledge, power and bliss. But if we rest eternally on this plane, the *madhyamā gatiḥ* of the Gita, our ascent remains unfinished, the evolution of the soul incomplete. Through the sattwic being and nature to that which is beyond the three gunas lies the way of the soul to its perfection.

The movement which will lead us out of the disturbances of the lower nature must be necessarily a movement towards equality in the mind, in the emotional temperament, in the soul. But it is to be noted that, although in the end we must arrive at a superiority to all the three gunas of the lower nature, it is yet in its incipience by a resort to one or other of the three that the movement must begin. The beginning of equality may be sattwic, rajasic or tamasic ; for there is a possibility in the human nature of a tamasic equality. It may be purely

tamasic, the heavy equability of a vital temperament rendered inertly irresponsive to the shocks of existence by a sort of dull insensibility undesirous of the joy of life. Or it may result from a weariness of the emotions and desires accumulated by a surfeit and satiety of the pleasure or else, on the contrary, a disappointment and a disgust and shrinking from the pain of life, a lassitude, a fear and horror and dislike of the world : it is then in its nature a mixed movement rajaso-tamasic, but the lower quality predominates. Or, approaching the sattwic principle, it may aid itself by the intellectual perception that the desires of life cannot be satisfied, that the soul is too weak to master life, that the whole thing is nothing but sorrow and transient effort and nowhere in it is there any real truth or sanity or light or happiness ; this is the sattwa-tamasic principle of equality. Essentially, the movement of tamasic equality is a generalisation of Nature's principle of *juguṣa* or self-protecting recoil extended from the shunning of particular painful effects to a shunning of the whole life of Nature itself as in sum leading to pain and self-tormenting and not to the delight which the soul demands.

In tamasic equality by itself there is no real liberation ; but it can be made a powerful starting-point, if, as in Indian asceticism, it is turned into the sattwic by the perception of the greater existence, the truer power, the higher delight of the immutable Self above Nature. The natural turn of such a movement, however, is towards Sannyasa, the renunciation of life and works, rather than to that union of inner renunciation of desire with continued activity in the world of Nature which the Gita advocates. The Gita, however, admits and makes room for this movement ; it allows as a recoiling starting-point the perception of the defects of the world-existence, birth and disease and death and old age and sorrow, the historic starting-point of the Buddha, *janma-mrityu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doshānu-*

darshanam, and it accepts the effort of those whose self-discipline is motivated by a desire for release, even in this spirit, from the curse of age and death, *jarâ-marana-mokshâya mām âcṛitya yatanti ye*. But that, to be of any profit, must be accompanied by the sattvic perception of a higher existence and a taking delight in and refuge in the existence of the Divine, *mām âcṛitya*. Then the soul by its recoil comes to a higher condition beyond the three gunas free from birth and death and age and grief and enjoys the immortality of its self-existence, *janmâ-mṛityu-jarâ-bhukhair vimukto 'mṛitam aṇute*. The tamasic unwillingness to accept the pain and effort of life is indeed by itself a weakening and degrading thing; this indeed is the danger of preaching to all alike the gospel of asceticism and world-disgust, that it puts the stamp of a tamasic weakness and shrinking on unfit souls, confuses their understanding, *buddhibhedam janayet*, diminishes the sustained aspiration, the confidence in living, the power of effort which the soul of man needs for its salutary, its necessary rajasic struggle to master its environment, without really opening to it,—for it is yet incapable of that,—a higher goal, a greater endeavour, a mightier victory. But in souls that are fit, this tamasic recoil may serve a useful spiritual purpose by slaying their rajasic attraction, their eager preoccupation with the lower life which prevents the sattvic awakening to a higher possibility. Seeking then for a refuge in the void they have created, they are able to hear the divine call, “O soul that findest thyself in this transient and unhappy world, turn and put thy delight in Me,” *anilyam asukham lokam imam prâpya bhajasva mām*.

Still, in this movement, the equality consists only in an equal recoil from all that constitutes the world; and it arrives at indifference and aloofness, but does not include that power to accept equally all the touches of the world pleasurable or painful without attachment or disturbance

which is a necessary element in the discipline of the Gita. Therefore, even if we begin with the tamasic recoil,—which is not at all necessary,—it can only be as a first incitement to a greater endeavour, not as a permanent pessimism. The real discipline begins with the movement to mastery over these things from which we were first inclined merely to flee. It is here that the possibility of a kind of rajasic equality comes in, which is at its lowest the strong nature's pride in self-mastery, self-control, superiority to passion and weakness ; but the Stoic ideal seizes upon this point of departure and makes it the key to an entire liberation of the soul from subjection to all weakness of its lower nature. As the tamasic inward recoil is a generalisation of Nature's principle of *juguṣā* or self-protection from suffering, so the rajasic upward movement is a generalisation of Nature's other principle of the acceptance of struggle and effort and the innate impulse of life towards mastery and victory ; but it transfers the battle to the field where alone complete victory is possible. Instead of a struggle for scattered outward aims and transient successes, it proposes nothing less than the conquest of Nature and the world itself by a spiritual struggle and an inner victory. The tamasic recoil turns away from both the pains and pleasures of the world to flee from them ; the rajasic movement turns upon them to bear, master and rise superior to them. The Stoic self-discipline calls desire and passion into its embrace of the wrestler and crushes them between its arms, as did old Dhritarastra in the epic the iron image of Bhima. It endures the shock of things painful and pleasurable, the causes of the physical and mental affections of the nature, and breaks their effects to pieces ; it is complete when the soul can bear all touches without being pained or attracted, excited or troubled. It seeks to make man the conqueror and king of his nature.

The Gita, making its call on the warrior nature of

Arjuna, starts with this heroic movement. It calls on him to turn on the great enemy desire and slay it. Its first description of equality is that of the Stoic philosopher. "He whose mind is undisturbed in the midst of sorrows and amid pleasures is freed from desire, from whom liking and fear and wrath have passed away, is the sage of settled understanding. Who in all things is without affection though visited by this good or that evil and neither hates nor rejoices, his intelligence sits firmly founded in wisdom." If one abstains from food, it says, giving a physical example, the object of sense ceases to affect, but the affection itself of the sense, the *rasa*, remains; it is only when, even in the exercise of the sense, it can keep back from seeking its sensuous aim in the object, *artha*, and abandon the affection, the desire for the pleasure of taste, that the highest level of the soul is reached. It is by using the mental organs on the objects, "ranging over them with the senses," *vishayân indriyaiḥ charan*, but with senses subject to the self, freed from liking and disliking, that one gets into a large and sweet clearness of soul and temperament in which passion and grief find no place. All desires have to enter into the soul, as waters into the sea, and yet it has to remain immovable, filled but not disturbed: so in the end all desires can be abandoned. To be freed from wrath and passion and fear and attraction is repeatedly stressed as a necessary condition of the liberated status, and for this we must learn to bear their shocks, which cannot be done without exposing ourselves to their causes. "He who can bear here in the body the velocity of wrath and desire, is the Yogin, the happy man." *Titiksha*, the will and power to endure, is the means. "The material touches which cause heat and cold, happiness and pain, things transient which come and go, these learn to endure. For the man whom these do not trouble nor pain, the firm and wise who is equal in pleasure and suffering, makes himself apt for immorta-

lity." The equal-souled has to bear suffering and not hate, to receive pleasure and not rejoice. Even the physical affections are to be mastered by endurance; and this too is part of the Stoic discipline. Age, death, suffering, pain are not fled from, but accepted and vanquished by a high indifference.* Not to flee appalled from Nature in her lower masks, but to meet and conquer her is the true instinct of the strong nature, *purusharshabha*, the leonine soul among men. Thus compelled, she throws aside her mask and reveals to him his true nature as the free soul, not her subject but her king and lord, *swarât, samrât*.

But the Gita accepts this stoic discipline, this heroic philosophy, on the same condition that it accepts the tamasic recoil,—it must have above it the sattwic vision of knowledge, at its root the aim at self-realisation and in its steps the ascent to the divine nature. A stoic discipline which merely crushed down the common affections of our human nature,—although less dangerous than a tamasic weariness of life, unfruitful pessimism and sterile inertia, because it would at least increase the power and self-mastery of the soul,—would still be no unmixed good, since it might lead to insensibility and an inhuman isolation without giving the spiritual release. The Stoic equality is justified as an element in the discipline of the Gita because it helps to the realisation of the free immutable self in the mobile human being, *param drishtrâ, eshâ brâhmî sthiti*. "Awakening by the understanding to the Highest which is beyond even the discerning mind, put force on the self by the self to make it firm and still, and slay this enemy who is so hard to assail, Desire." Both the tamasic recoil of escape and the rajasic movement of

* *Dhîras tatra na muhyati*, says the Gita: the strong and wise soul is not perplexed, troubled or moved by them. But still they are accepted only to be conquered. *na-h-matana-nokshatya patanti*.

struggle and victory are only justified when they look beyond themselves through the sattvic principle to the self-knowledge which legitimises both the recoil and the struggle.

The pure philosopher, the thinker, the born sage not only relies upon the sattvic principle in him as his ultimate justification, but uses it from the beginning as his instrument of self-mastery. He starts from the sattvic equality. He too observes the transitoriness of the material and external world and its failure to satisfy the desires, to give the true delight, but this causes in him no grief, fear or disappointment. He observes all with an eye of tranquil discernment and makes his choice without repulsion or perplexity. "The enjoyments born of the touches of things are causes of sorrow, they have a beginning and an end; therefore the sage, the man of awakened understanding, *budhah*, does not place his delight in these." "The self in him is unattached to the touches of external things; he finds his happiness in himself." He sees, as the Gita puts it, that he is himself his own enemy and his own friend, and therefore he takes care not to dethrone himself by casting his being into the hands of desire and passion, *uātmānam avasadayet*, but delivers himself out of that imprisonment by his own inner power, *uddhared atmanātmānam*; for whoever has conquered his lower self, finds in his higher self his best friend and ally. He becomes satisfied with knowledge, master of his senses, a Yogin by sattvic equality,—for equality is Yoga, *samatvam yoga uchyate*,—regarding alike clod and stone and gold, tranquil and self-poised in heat and cold, suffering and happiness, honour and disgrace. He is equal in soul to friend and enemy and to neutral and indifferent, because he sees that these are transitory relations born of the changing conditions of life. Even by the pretensions of learning and purity and virtue and the claims to superiority which men base upon these

things, he is not led away. He is equal-souled to all men, to the sinner and the saint, to the virtuous, learned and cultured Brahmin and the fallen outcaste. All these are the Gita's descriptions of the sattwic equality, and they sum up well enough what is familiar to the world as the calm philosophic equality of the sage.

Where then is the difference between this and the larger equality taught by the Gita? It lies in the difference between this philosophic discernment and the spiritual, the Vedantic knowledge of unity on which the Gita founds its teaching. The philosopher maintains his equality by the power of the buddhi, the discerning mind, but even that is a doubtful foundation; for, though master of himself on the whole by a constant attention or an acquired habit of mind, in reality he is not free from his lower nature, and it does actually assert itself in many ways and may at any moment take a violent revenge for its rejection and suppression. For, always, the play of the lower nature is a triple play, and the rajasic and tamasic qualities are ever lying in wait for the sattwic man. "Even the mind of the wise man who labours for perfection is carried away by the vehement insistence of the senses." Perfect security can only be had by resorting to something higher than the sattwic quality, something higher than the discerning mind, to the Self,—not the philosopher's intelligent self, but the divine sage's spiritual self which is beyond the three gunas. All must be consummated by a divine birth into the higher spiritual nature.

And the philosopher's equality is like the Stoic's, like the world-fleeing ascetic's, inwardly a lonely freedom, remote and aloof from men; but the man born into the divine birth has found the Divine not only in himself, but in all beings. He has realised his unity with all and his equality is therefore full of sympathy and oneness. He sees all as himself and is not intent on his lonely

salvation ; he even takes upon himself the burden of their happiness and sorrow to which he is not himself affected or subject. The perfect sage, the Gita more than once repeats, is ever engaged with a large equality in doing good to all creatures and makes that his occupation and delight, *sarvabhûtahite ratah*. The perfect Yogin is no solitary musing on the Self in his ivory tower of spiritual isolation, but, *yuktah kṛtsna-karma-krit*, a many-sided universal worker for the good of the world, for God in the world. For he is a *bhakta*, a lover and devotee of the Divine, as well as a sage and a Yogin, a lover who loves God wherever he finds Him and who finds Him everywhere ; and what he loves, he does not disdain to serve, nor does action carry him away from the bliss of union, since all his acts proceed from the One in him and to the One in all they are directed. The equality of the Gita is a large synthetic equality in which all is lifted up into the integrality of the divine being and the divine nature.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

III

THE CONQUEST OF SELF

TO RENOUNCE THE WORLD

- 1 Love cannot be used for the fulfilment of desire, for its nature is renunciation. Renunciation is the renunciation of ritual works and worldly affairs.
- 2 The insensate enter into the world, seduced by its false splendours. But just as it is easier to get into a net than to escape from it, so is it easier to enter into the world than, having once entered, to renounce it.
- 3 The man who lives in the bosom of the temptations of the world and attains perfection, is the true hero.
- 4 A boat can be in the water, but the water ought not to be in the boat. So the aspirant may live in the world, but the world should find no place in him.
- 5 What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?
- 6 Man is in truth a compound of eternity and time. The more he is attached to temporal things and rests

1) Narada Sutra.— 2) Ramakrishna.— 3) id.— 4) id.—
5) Matthew. XVI. 26.— 6) J. Tauler : Institutions.

- in them, the farther he grows from things eternal ; they seem to him petty, just as great objects appear small when we see them from a distance, and he can
- 7 never attain to real peace.—Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun ?
- 8 Is it from without that there can come to a man the sweetness and the charm of his life ? Is it not rather from the wisdom of his virtues that flow as from a happy source his real pleasures and his real joys ?
- 9 Whoever gives himself up to rational meditations, finds very soon the joy in all that is good. He sees that riches and beauty are impermanent and wisdom the most precious of jewels.
- 10 Youth, beauty, life, riches, health, friends are things that pass ; let not the wise man attach himself at all to these.
- 11 When the sage has recognised impermanence, subjection to grief and unreality of substance as the three characteristic qualities of this world, how can his heart own attachment to the things of this world ?—
- 12 In the Ineffable who is the indivisible and eternal bliss, are centred all pleasure and happiness. Those who enjoy him, can find no attraction in the facile and valueless pleasures of the world.
- 13 What can he desire in the world who is greater than the world ?
- 14 What joy is there in this world which is everywhere a prey to flames ?
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- 15 O disciples, be ye heirs to Truth, not to worldly
- 16 things.—Love not the world, neither the things that

7) Ecclesiastes. I, 2, 3.— 8) Plutarch.— 9) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.— 10) Mahabharata.— 11) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.— 12) Ramakrishna — 13) St. Cyprian.— 14) Dhammapadam — 15) Magghima Nikaya.— 16) 1 John II. 15

- 17 are in the world.—Seek those things which are above.
 18 —Covet earnestly the best gifts.
 19 My son, go back into thy self by disentangling thyself as much as thou mayst from all things ; seek purity from things below by detaching thy will and thy heart from the love of sensible objects.
 20 Reject passion and attachment, then shall be revealed in thee that which now dwells hidden from thy eyes.
 21 Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 22 —O friend, fill not with mortal thoughts thy heart which is the seat of eternal mysteries.
 23 What offering should be made that we may attain to the Eternal ? To find the Eternal thou must offer him thy body, thy mind and all thy possessions.
 24 No man of war entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.
 25 If you would live tranquil and free, get rid of the
 26 habit of all which you can do without.—Man ! renounce all that thou mayst be happy, that thou mayst be free, that thou mayst have thy soul large and great. Carry high thy head,...and thou art delivered from servitude.
 27 So live as if thou hadst at once to say farewell to life and the time yet accorded thee were an unexpected
 28 gift.—Eternity is for all time, but the world only for a moment. Sell not then for that moment thy kingdom of eternity.

17) Colossians. III. 1.—18) I Corinthians. XII. 21.—19) J. Tauler.
 — 20) Sutra in 42 articles.— 21) Matthew. VI. 21.— 22) Bahaullah.— 23) Ramakrishna.— 24) II Timothy. II. 4. — 25) Tolstoi.
 — 26) Epictetus.— 27) Marcus Aurelius.— 28) Omar Khayyam.

The Psychology of Social Development

XIX

The present age of mankind may be characterised from this psychological point of view as a more and more rapidly evolving attempt to find a secure basis for a rational system of society. It has been an age of progress ; but progress may be of two kinds, adaptive, with a secure basis in the unalterable principle of the society and constant change only in the circumstances and machinery to suit fresh ideas and fresh needs, or else radical, with no long-secure basis, but instead a constant radical questioning of the foundations and very principle of the established society. The modern age has resolved itself into a constant series of radical progressions.

A principle of society is put forward by the thinker, seizes on the general mind, becomes a social gospel, dethrones the preceding principle and takes its place as the foundation of society. For a time men live in the enthusiasm or, when the enthusiasm sinks, in the habit of their great achievement, and proceed indeed to adapt, to alter constantly, to develop more or less rapidly,—for it is the very nature of the reason to observe, to be open to new ideas, to respond quickly to new needs and possi-

bilities and not to rest always in the unquestioning acceptance of every habit and old association,—but still they do not think of questioning their social principle or imagine that it will ever need alteration, but are bent only on perfecting its forms and making it more thorough, sincere and effective in the application. A time, however, comes when the reason becomes dissatisfied, begins to see that it is only erecting a mass of new conventions ; the voice of the few thinkers who had, perhaps almost from the first, questioned the sufficiency of the social principle, begins to make itself felt, and the society starts on the round to a new radical progression, a new revolution, the reign of a more advanced social principle.

This process has to continue until the reason can find a principle of society or else a combination and adjustment of several principles which will satisfy it. The question is whether it will ever be satisfied or can ever rest from questioning, unless either it sinks back into a sleep of tradition and convention or else goes forward by a great awakening to the reign of a higher spirit than its own and opens into a supra-rational or spiritual age of mankind. If we may judge from the modern movement, the progress of the reason applying itself to society is destined by its own nature to pass through three successive stages which are the very logic of its growth, the first individualistic and increasingly democratic, with liberty for its principle, the second socialistic, a governmental communism, with equality and the State for its principle, the third anarchistic, in the higher sense of that much-abused word, a free communism with brotherhood for its principle. It is in the transition to its third and consummating stage that the power and sufficiency of the reason will be tested ; it will then be seen whether the reason can really be the master of our nature, solve the problems of our interrelated and conflicting egoisms and bring about within itself a perfect principle of society, or

must give way to a higher guide.

We have already seen that it is individualism which opens the way to the age of reason and that individualism gets its impulse and its chance of development by following upon an age of dominant conventionalism. It is not that in the pre-individualistic, pre-rational ages there were no thinkers upon society and the communal life of man ; but they did not think in the characteristic rational method, critical, logical, all-observing, all-questioning, proceeding from the reasoned perception of a truth to the endeavour after its pure, perfect and universal application. They looked upon life as it was and sought to know its secret by intuition and insight ; symbols embodying the truths of life and being, types setting them in an arrangement and psychological order, institutions giving them a material fixity in their effectuation by life, this was the form in which they shaped their attempt to understand and mentalise life, to govern life by mind.

But reason seeks to understand and interpret life by one kind of symbol only, the idea ; it generalises the facts of life in ideas so that it may be able to master and arrange them, and having hold of an idea it looks for its largest general application. And in order that these ideas may not be a mere abstraction divorced from the truth of things, it has to be constantly comparing them with facts. It has to be always questioning facts so that it may find the ideas by which they can be more and more adequately ordered and managed, and always questioning ideas in order, first, to see whether they square with actual facts and, secondly, whether there are not new facts to suit which they must be modified or enlarged or which can be evolved out of them. For reason lives not only in actual facts, but in possibilities, not only in realised truths, but in ideal truths ; and the ideal truth once seen, its impulse is to see whether that cannot be realised in life. It

is by this inherent characteristic that the age of reason must always be an age of progress.

So long as the old method of mentalising life served its purpose, there was no necessity for men in the mass to think out their life by the aid of the reason ; but it ceased to serve its purpose as soon as its symbols, types, institutions became conventions so imprisoning truth that there was no longer a force of insight sufficient to deliver it from its coatings. Man may for a time, for a long time even, live by the mere tradition of things whose reality he has lost, but not permanently ; the necessity of questioning all his conventions and traditions arises, and by that necessity reason gets her first real chance of an entire self-development. Reason can accept no tradition merely for the sake of its antiquity or its past greatness ; it has to ask, first, whether it contains at all any still living truth and, secondly, whether it contains the best truth available to man for the government of his life. It can accept no convention merely because men are agreed upon it ; it has to ask whether they are right in being agreed upon it. It cannot accept any institution merely because it serves some purpose of life ; it has to ask whether there are not greater and better purposes which can be best served by new institutions. There arises the necessity of an universal questioning by reason, and from that necessity arises the idea that society can only be perfected by the universal application of reason to the whole of life, its principles, its details, its machinery.

This reason which is to be universally applied, cannot be the reason of a ruling class ; for that always means in practice the fettering and misapplication of reason, degraded into a servant of power, to maintain the privileges of the ruling class and justify the existing order by which they are secured. It cannot be the reason of a few preeminent thinkers ; for, if the mass is infra-rational, the application of their ideas becomes in practice disfigured,

ineffective, incomplete, speedily altered into mere form and convention. It must be the reason of each and all seeking for a basis of agreement. Hence arises the principle of individualistic democracy, that the reason of every individual in the society must be allowed to count equally in determining its government, in selecting both the essential basis and the detailed ordering of its life,—not because the reason of one man is as good as the reason of any other, but because otherwise we get back inevitably to the rule of a predominant class, which, however modified by being obliged to count to some extent the opinion of the ruled, must exhibit always the irrational vice of reason subordinated to the purposes of power and not flexibly used for its own proper and ideal ends. Secondly, each individual must be allowed to govern his life according to the dictates of his own reason, so far as that can be done without impinging on the same right in others; this is a necessary corollary of the primary principle on which the age of reason founds its initial movement. It is sufficient for the first purposes of the rational age that each man should be supposed to have sufficient intelligence to understand views which are presented and explained to him, to consider the opinions of his fellows and to form in consultation with them his own judgment; that he contributes as his share to the formation of the common judgment by which society must be ruled. And it is sufficient also for its first ideal that this common judgment should be effectively organised only for the indispensable common ends of the society, while in all else men must be left free to govern their own life according to their own reason and find freely its best possible natural adjustment with the lives of others. In this way by the practice of the free use of reason men can grow into rational beings living by common agreement a liberal, a vigorous, a natural and yet rationalised existence.

In practice it is found that these ideas will not hold

for a long time. For the ordinary man is not yet a rational being ; emerging from a long infra-rational past, he is not naturally able to form a reasonable judgment, but thinks either according to his own impulses and prejudices or else according to the ideas of others more active in intelligence or swift in action, who are able by some means to establish an influence over his mind. Secondly, he does not yet use his reason in order to come to an agreement with his fellows, but rather to enforce his own opinions by struggle and conflict with the opinions of others. Exceptionally he may utilise his reason for the pursuit of truth, but normally it serves for the justification of his impulses, prejudices and interests ; it is these that determine or at least quite discolour and disfigure his ideals, even when he has learned at all to have ideals. Finally, he does not use his freedom to arrive at a rational adjustment of his life with the life of others, but to enforce the aims of his life at the expense of or, as it is euphemistically put, in competition with the life of others. There is thus a wide gulf between the ideal and the first results to which this disparity between fact and idea must lead.

The individualistic democratic ideal leads first of all to the more and more precarious rule of a dominant class in the name of democracy over the more ignorant, more numerous and less fortunate mass. Secondly, since the ideal of freedom and equality is abroad and cannot be stifled, it leads to the increasing effort of the latter to assert their right and to correct this pseudo-democratic falsehood into the real democratic truth ; therefore, to a war of classes. Thirdly, it brings us to a perpetual strife of parties, all lifting the banner of conflicting ideas or ideals, but all really fighting out under that flag a battle of conflicting interests. Finally, it results fatally in an increasing stress of competition which replaces the ordered tyrannies of the infra-rational periods of humanity by a sort of ordered conflict ending in the survival not of the spiritually,

rationality or physically fittest, but of the most fortunate and vitally successful. It is evident enough that this is not a rational order of society ; and it is not at all that which the individualistic reason of man had contemplated as its ideal or set out to accomplish.

The natural remedy for the first defects of the individualistic theory would seem to be to generalise education ; for if man is not by nature, he can at least be made by education something like a rational being. Universal education, therefore, is the inevitable second step of the democratic movement in its attempt to rationalise human society. But a rational education means necessarily three things, first, to teach men how to observe and know rightly the facts on which they have to form a judgment ; secondly, to train them to think fruitfully and soundly ; thirdly, to fit them to use their knowledge and their thought effectively for their own and the common good. Capacity of observation and knowledge, capacity of intelligence and judgment, capacity of action and high character are required for the citizenship of a rational order of society, and deficiency in any of these is a sure source of failure. Unfortunately, the actual education given even in the most advanced countries has not had the least relation to these necessities. And just as the first defects and failures of democracy have given occasion to the enemy to blaspheme and to vaunt the superiority or even the quite imaginary perfection of the ideal past, so also the first defects of its great remedy, education, have led many superior minds to deny its efficiency and condemn the democratic ideal as an exploded fiction.

Democracy and its panacea of education and freedom have certainly done something for mankind. To begin with, the people are, for the first time in the historical period of history, erect, active and alive, and where there is life, there is always a hope of better things. Secondly, knowledge and with it some kind of active intelligence

based on knowledge and strengthened by the habit of being called on to judge and decide between conflicting issues and opinions in all sorts of matters have been much more generalised than was formerly possible. Men are being progressively trained to use their minds, to apply intelligence to life, and that is a great gain. If they have not yet learned to think soundly, clearly and rightly, they are at least able now to choose with some kind of intelligence the thought they shall accept and follow. Equal educational equipment and equal opportunity of life have by no means been acquired ; but there is a much greater equalisation than in former states of society. And here a new and enormous defect has revealed itself which is proving fatal to the social idea which engendered it. For given even perfect equality of educational and other opportunity, which does not yet really exist and cannot in the individualistic state of society, to what purpose is it likely to be used ? Man, the half infra-rational being, demands two things for his satisfaction, power and enjoyment ; and in the old societies these could be secured by him according to his birth, his fixed status and the use of his capacity within the limits of his hereditary status. That basis once removed and no proper substitute provided, the same ends can only be secured by success in a scramble for the one power left, the power of wealth. Accordingly, instead of a harmoniously ordered society a huge organised competitive system, a frantically rapid and one-sided development of industrialism and under the garb of democracy an increasing plutocratic tendency have been the last results of the individualistic ideal and its democratic machinery.

The natural result has been the transition of the rational mind from democratic individualism to democratic socialism. Socialism has had the disadvantage of starting in a revolt against capitalism, against the rule of the successful bourgeois and the plutocrat, and is consequently compelled to work itself out by a war of classes ; it has

moreover started from an industrialised social system and itself taken on at the beginning a purely industrial and economic appearance. But its real justification is its attempt to carry on the rational ordering of society to its fulfilment while getting rid of this great natural excrecence of unbridled competition. It seeks to replace a system of organised economic battle by an organised order and peace. But this can no longer be done on the old lines of an artificial or inherited inequality, brought about by denying equal opportunity and then justified by declaring the result to be an eternal law of society ; that is a falsehood which the reason of man will no longer permit. Neither can it be done, it seems, on the basis of individual liberty. Socialism therefore does away with the democratic basis of individual liberty, even while accepting other ideas and fruits of the democratic ideal, and by so doing it leads to a new radical change in the basic principle of society. Equality is to be the basis, not a political only, but a perfect social equality ; equality of opportunity, but also equality of status without which the other cannot be secured ; for, even if established, it cannot last. This equality again is impossible if personal, which means inherited right in property is to exist, and therefore socialism abolishes the right of personal property. Who then is to possess the property ? It can only be the community as a whole. And who is to administer it ? Again, the community as a whole. In order to justify this idea, the socialistic principle has practically to deny the existence of the individual or his right to exist except as a member of the society and for its sake. He belongs entirely to the society, not only his property, but himself, his labour, his capacities, the education it gives him and its results, his mind, his knowledge, his individual life, his family life, the life of his children. Moreover, since his individual reason cannot be trusted to work out naturally a right and rational adjustment of his life with the life of others,

it is for the reason of the whole community to arrange that for him. Not the reasoning minds and wills of the individuals, but the collective reasoning mind and will of the community has to govern. It is this which will determine not only the principles and all the details of the economical and political order, but the whole life of the community and of the individual as a working, thinking, feeling cell of this life, the development of his capacities, his actions, the use of the knowledge he has acquired, the whole ordering of his vital, his ethical, his intelligent being. So only can the collective reason and intelligent will of the race, overcoming the egoism of individualistic life, bring about a perfect principle and rational order of society.

It is true that the socialistic mind still bears the impress of the old democratic ideas and cherishes hopes, betraying it often into strange illogicalities, of combining some kind of individual freedom with the rigours of the collectivist idea. But it is evidently these to which things are tending and to which they must tend if the collectivist idea is to prevail and not to stop short and falter in the middle of its course. But the idea contains several fallacies inconsistent with the real facts of human life and nature, and just as the idea of individualistic democracy found itself before long in difficulties which have led to its discredit and approaching overthrow, so the idea of collectivist democracy may well find itself before long in difficulties which must lead to its discredit and eventual replacement by a third stage of the inevitable progression. Liberty protected by a State in which all are politically equal, was the idea of individualistic democracy. Equality social and political enforced through a perfect and careful order by a State which is the organised will of the whole community, is the idea of socialistic democracy. A third idea presents itself which disowns the State idea and declares for liberty and equality based upon free brotherhood in a free community, the ideal both of intellectual and of spiritual Anarchism.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXX

The issues of the Russian idea of free nationality are greatly complicated by the transitory phenomena of a revolution which seeks, like the French Revolution before it, to transform immediately and without easy intermediate stages the whole basis not only of government, but of society, and is, moreover, being carried out under pressure of a disastrous war. This double situation has led inevitably to an unexampled anarchy and, incidentally, to the temporary forceful domination of an extreme party which represents the ideas of the Revolution in their most uncompromising and violent form. The Bolshevik despotism corresponds in this respect to the Jacobin despotism of the French Reign of Terror. The latter lasted long enough to secure its work, which was to effect violently and irrevocably the transition from the post-feudal system of society to the first basis of democratic development. The Labourite despotism in Russia, the rule of the Soviets, should it fix its hold and last long enough, may possibly effect the transition of society to a second and more advanced basis of the same development. But we are concerned only with the effect on the ideal of free nationality. On this point all Russia except the small reactionary party seems to be agreed ; but the resort to the principle of government by force brings in a contradic-

tory element which endangers its sound effectuation even in Russia itself and therefore weakens the force which it might have in the immediate future of the world-development. For it stands on a moral principle which belongs to the future, while government by force belongs to the past and present and is radically inconsistent with the founding of the new world-arrangement on the basis of free choice and free status.

The political arrangement of the world hitherto has rested on an almost entirely physical and vital, that is to say, a geographical, commercial, political and military basis. Both the nation idea and the State idea have built themselves on this foundation. The first unity aimed at has been a geographical, commercial, political and military union, and in establishing this unity the earlier vital principle of race on which the clan and tribe founded themselves, has been everywhere overridden. It is true that nationhood still founds itself largely on the idea of race, but this is in the nature of a fiction. It covers the historical fact of a fusion of many races and attributes a natural motive to a historical and geographical association. Nationhood founds itself partly on this association, partly on others which accentuate it, common interests, community of language, community of culture, and all these in unison have evolved a psychological idea, a psychological unity, which finds expression in the idea of nationalism. But the nation idea and the State idea do not everywhere coincide, and in most cases the former has been overridden by the latter, and always on the same physical and vital grounds, grounds of geographical, economical, political and military convenience or necessity. In the conflict between the two, force, as in all vital and physical struggle, most always be the final arbiter. But the new principle proposed, that of the right of every natural grouping which feels its own separateness to choose its own status and partnerships, makes a clean sweep of these

vital and physical grounds and substitutes a purely psychological principle of free will and free choice as against the claims of political and economic necessity. Or rather the vital and physical grounds of grouping are only to be held valid when they receive this psychological sanction and are to found themselves upon it.

How the two rival principles work out, can be seen by the example of Russia itself which is now prominently before our eyes. Russia has never been a nation-State in the pure sense of the word, like France, Spain, Italy, Great Britain or modern Germany ; it has been a congeries of nations, Great Russia, Ruthenian Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Siberia, all Slavic with a dash of Tartar and German blood, Courland which is mostly Slav but partly German, Finland which has no community of any kind with the rest of Russia, and latterly the Asiatic nations of Turkestan, all bound together by one bond only, the rule of the Tsar. The only psychological justification of such a union was the future possibility of fusion into a single nation with the Russian language as its instrument of culture, thought and government, and it was this which the old Russian regime had in view. The only way to bring this about was by governmental force, as had been long attempted by England in Ireland and was being attempted by Germany in German Poland and Lorraine. The Austrian method of federation employed with Hungary or of a pressure tempered by leniency, by concessions and by measures of administrative half-autonomy might have been tried, but their success in Austria has been small. Federation has not as yet proved a successful principle except between States and nations or sub-nations already disposed to unite by ties of common culture, a common past or an already developed or developing sense of common nationhood ; such conditions existed in the American States and in Germany, they exist in China and in India ; but they have not existed in

Austria or Russia. Or, if things and ideas had been ripe, instead of this attempt, there might have been an endeavour to found a free union of nations with the Tsar as the symbol of a supra-national idea and bond of unity ; but for this the movement of the world was not yet ready. Against an obstinate psychological resistance the vital and physical motive of union could only resort to force military, administrative and political, which has succeeded often enough in the past. In Russia it was probably on the way to a slow success as far as the Slavic portions of the Empire were concerned ; in Finland, perhaps also in Poland, it would probably have failed much more irretrievably than the long reign of force failed in Ireland, partly because even a Russian or a German autocracy cannot apply perfectly and simply the large, thorough-going and utterly brutal and predatory methods of a Cromwell or Elizabeth, partly because the resisting psychological factor of nationalism had become too self-conscious and capable of an organised passive resistance or at least a passive force of survival.

But if the psychological justification was deficient or only in process of creation, the vital and physical case for a strictly united Russia, not excluding Finland, was overwhelming. The work of the Peters and Catharines was founded on a strong political, military and economical necessity. From the political and military point of view all these Slavic nations had everything to lose by disunion, because, disunited, they were each exposed and they exposed each other to the oppressive contact of any powerful neighbour, Sweden, Turkey, Poland, while Poland was a hostile and powerful State, or as now Germany and Austria. The union of the Ukraine Cossacks with Russia was indeed brought about by mutual agreement as a measure of defence against Poland. Poland itself, once weakened, stood a better chance by being united with Russia than by standing helpless and alone

between three large and powerful neighbours, and her total inclusion would certainly have been a better solution for her than the fatal partition between these three hungry powers. On the other hand by union a State was created, so geographically compact, yet so large in bulk, numerous in population, well-defended by natural conditions and rich in potential resources that, if it had been properly organised, it could not only have stood secure in itself, but dominated half Asia, as it already does, and half Europe, as it was once, even without proper organisation and development, almost on the way to do, when it interfered as armed arbiter, here deliverer, there champion of oppression, in the Balkans and in Austro-Hungary. Even the assimilation of Finland was justified from this point of view ; for a free Finland would have left Russia geographically and economically incomplete and beset and limited in her narrow Baltic outlet, while a Finland dominated by a strong Sweden or a powerful Germany would have been a standing military menace to the Russian capital and the Russian empire. The inclusion of Finland on the contrary makes Russia secure, at ease and powerful at this vital point. Nor, might it be argued, did Finland itself really lose, since, independent, she would be too small and weak to maintain herself against neighbouring imperial aggressiveness and must rely on the support of Russia. All these advantages have been destroyed, temporarily at least, by the centrifugal forces let loose by the Revolution and its principle of the free choice of nationalities.

It is evident that these arguments, founded as they are on vital and physical necessity and regardless of moral and psychological justification, might be carried very far. They would not only justify Austria's domination of Trieste and her Slavic territories, as they justified England's conquest and holding of Ireland against the continued resistance of the Irish people, but also, extended

a little farther, Germany's schemes of Pan-Germanism and even her larger ideas of absorption and expansion. It could be extended to validate all that imperial expansion of the European nations which has now no moral justification and can only be justified morally in the future by the creation of supra-national psychological unities ; for the vital and physical grounds always exist. Even the moral, at least the psychological and cultural justification of a unified Russian culture and life in process of creation, could be extended, and the European claim to spread and universalise European civilisation by annexation and governmental force presents on its larger scale a certain moral analogy. This, too, extended, might justify the pre-War German ideal of a sort of unification of the world under the aegis of German power and German culture. But however liable to abuse by extension, vital necessity may be allowed to hold in a world still dominated fundamentally by the law of force, however mitigated in its application, and by vital and physical necessity, so far at least as concerns natural geographical unities like Russia, the United Kingdom, even Austria within its natural frontiers.

The Russian principle belongs, in fact, to a possible future in which moral and psychological principles will have a real chance to dominate and vital and physical necessities will have to suit themselves to them, instead of, as now, the other way round; it belongs to an arrangement of things the exact reverse of the present international system. As things are at present, it has to struggle against difficulties which may well be insuperable. The Russians have been much ridiculed and more vilified for their offer of a democratic peace founded on the free choice of nations to autocratic and militarist Germany bent on expansion by dishonest diplomacy and by the sword. From the point of view of practical statesmanship the ridicule is justified; for the offer ignored facts and forces and founded

itself on the power of the naked and unarmed idea. The Russians, thoroughgoing idealists, acted, in fact, in the same spirit as did once the French in the first fervour of their revolutionary enthusiasm, offering their new principle of liberty and democratic peace to the world,—not, at first, to Germany alone,—in the hope that its moral beauty and truth and inspiration would compel acceptance, not by the Governments, but by the peoples who would force the hands of their governments or overturn them if they opposed. Like the French revolutionists, they have found that ours is still a world in which ideals can only be imposed if they have a preponderating vital and physical force in their hands or at their backs. The French Jacobins with their ideal of unitarian nationalism were able to concentrate their energies and make their principle triumph for a time by force of arms against a hostile world. The Russian idealists find in their attempt to effectuate their principle that the principle itself is a source of weakness; they find themselves helpless against the hard-headed German cynicism, not because they are disorganised,—for revolutionary France was also disorganised and overcame the difficulty,—but because the dissolution of the old Russian fabric to which they have consented, has deprived them of the means of united and organised action. Nevertheless their principle is a more advanced, because a moral principle than the aggressive nationalism which was all the international result of the French Revolution; it has a greater meaning for the future.

For it belongs to a future of free world-union in which precisely this principle of free self-determination must be either the preliminary movement or the final result, to an arrangement of things in which the world will have done with war and force as the ultimate basis of national and international relations and be ready to adopt free agreement as a substitute. If the idea is able to work itself out within the bounds of Russia and arrive at some

principle of common action, even at the cost of that aggressive force which national centralisation can alone give, it will mean a new moral power in the world. It will certainly not be accepted elsewhere, except in case of unexpected revolutions, without enormous reserves and qualifications ; but it will be there working as a power to make the world ready for itself and, when it is ready, will play a large determining part in the final arrangement of human unity.

The Future Poetry

RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

The mantra, poetic expression of the deepest spiritual reality, is only possible when three highest intensities of poetic speech meet and become indissolubly one, a highest intensity of rhythmic movement, a highest intensity of verbal form and thought-substance, of style, and a highest intensity of the soul's vision of truth. All great poetry comes about by a unison of these three elements ; it is the insufficiency of one or another which makes the inequalities in the work of even the greatest poets ; and it is the failure of some one element which is the cause of their lapses, of the scoriae in their work, the spots in the sun. But it is only at a certain highest level of the fused intensities that the mantra becomes possible.

From a certain point of view it is the rhythm, the poetic movement which is of primary importance ; for that is the first fundamental, indispensable element without which all the rest, whatever its other value, remains unacceptable to the Muse of poetry. A perfect rhythm will often even give immortality to work which is slight in vision and very far from the higher intensities of style. But it is not merely metrical rhythm, even in a perfect technical excellence, which we mean when we speak of poetic movement ; that perfection is only the first step, the physical basis. There must be a deeper and more subtle music, a rhythmical soul-movement entering into the metrical form and often overflowing it, before the real poetic achievement begins. A mere metrical excellence,

however subtle, rich or varied, however perfectly it satisfies the outer ear, does not meet the deeper aims of the creative spirit ; for there is an inner hearing which makes its greater claim, and to reach and satisfy it is the true aim of the creator of melody and harmony.

Nevertheless metre, by which we mean a fixed and balanced system of the measures of sound, *mâtrâ*, is not only the traditional, but also surely the right physical basis for the poetic movement. A recent modern tendency,—that which has given us the poetry of Whitman and Carpenter and the experimentalists in *vers libre* in France and Italy,—denies this tradition and sets aside metre as a limiting bondage, perhaps even a frivolous artificiality or a falsification of true, free and natural poetic rhythm. That is, it seems to me, a point of view which cannot eventually prevail, because it does not deserve to prevail. It certainly cannot triumph, unless it justifies itself by supreme rhythmical achievements beside which the highest work of the great masters of poetic harmony in the past shall sink into a clear inferiority. That has not yet been done. On the contrary, *vers libre* has done its best when it has either limited its aim in rhythm to a kind of chanting poetical prose or else based itself on a sort of irregular and complex metrical movement which in its inner law, though not in its form, recalls the idea of Greek choric poetry.

Milton disparaging rhyme, which he had himself used with so much skill in his earlier, less sublime, but more beautiful poetry, forgot or ignored the spiritual value of rhyme, its power to enforce and clinch the appeal of melodic or harmonic recurrence which is a principal element in the measured movement of poetry, its habit of opening sealed doors to the inspiration, its capacity to suggest and reveal beauty to that supra-intellectual something in us which music is powerful to awake. The Whitmanic technique falls into a similar, but wider error. When mankind found out the power of thought and feeling thrown into fixed and recurring measures of sound to move and take possession of the mind and soul, they were not discovering a mere artistic device, but a subtle truth of psychology, of which the conscious theory is preserved in the Vedic tradition. And when the ancient Indians

chose more often than not to throw whatever they wished to endure, even philosophy, science and law, into metrical form, it was not merely to aid the memory,—they were able to memorise huge prose Brahmanas quite as accurately as the Vedic hymnal or the metrical Upanishads,—but because they perceived that metrical speech has in itself not only an easier durability, but a greater natural power than unmetrical, not only an intenser value of sound, but a force to compel language and sense to heighten themselves in order to fall fitly into this stricter mould. There is perhaps a truth in the Vedic idea that the Spirit of creation framed all the movements of the world by *dhandas*, in certain fixed rhythms of the formative word, and it is because they are faithful to the cosmic metres that the basic world-movements unchangingly endure. A balanced harmony maintained by a system of subtle recurrences is the foundation of immortality in created things, and metrical movement is simply creative sound grown conscious of this secret of its own powers.

Still there are all sorts of heights and gradations in the use of this power. General consent seems indeed to have sanctioned the name of poetry for any kind of effective language set in a vigorous or catching metrical form, and although the wideness of this definition is such that it has enabled even the Macaulays and Kiplings to mount their queer poetic thrones, I will not object : catholicity is always a virtue. Nevertheless, mere force of language tacked on to the trick of the metrical beat does not answer the higher description of poetry ; it may have the form or its shadow, it has not the essence. There is a whole mass of poetry,—the French metrical romances and most of the mediaeval Ballad poetry may be taken as examples,—which relies simply on the metrical beat for its rhythm and on an even level of just tolerable expression for its style ; there is hardly a line whose rhythm floats home or where the expression strikes deep. Even in later European poetry, though the art of verse and language has been better learned, essentially the same method persists, and poets who use it have earned not only the popular suffrage, but the praise of the critical mind. Still the definitive verdict on their verse is that it

is nothing more than an effective jog-trot of Pegasus, a pleasing canter or a showy gallop. It has great staying-power,—indeed there seems no reason why, once begun, it should not go on for ever,—it carries the poet easily over his ground, but it does nothing more. Certainly, no real soul-movement can get easily into this mould. It has its merits and its powers; it is good for metrical romances of a sort, for war poetry and popular patriotic poetry, or perhaps any poetry which wants to be an "echo of life"; it may stir, not the soul, but the vital being in us like a trumpet or excite it like a drum. But after all the drum and the trumpet do not carry us far in the way of music.

But even high above this level we still do not get at once the greater sound-movement of which we are speaking. Poets of considerable power, sometimes the greatest, are satisfied ordinarily with a set harmony or a set melody, which is very satisfying to the outward ear and carries the aesthetic sense along with it in a sort of even, indistinctive pleasure, and into this mould of easy melody or harmony they throw their teeming or flowing imagination without difficulty or check, without any need of an intenser heightening, a deeper appeal. It is beautiful poetry; it satisfies the aesthetic sense, the imagination and the ear; but there the charm ends. Once we have heard its rhythm, we have nothing new to expect, no surprise for the inner ear, no danger of the soul being suddenly seized and carried away into unknown depths. It is sure of being floated along evenly as if upon a flowing stream. Or sometimes it is not so much a flowing stream as a steady march or other even movement: this comes oftenest in poets who appeal more to the thought than to the ear; they are concerned chiefly with the thing they have to say and satisfied to have found an adequate rhythmic mould into which they can throw it without any farther preoccupation.

But even a great attention and skill in the use of metrical possibilities, in the invention of rhythmical turns, devices, modulations, variations, strong to satisfy the intelligence, to seize the ear, to maintain its vigilant interest, will not bring us yet to the higher point we have in view. There are periods of literature in which this kind of skill

is carried very far. The rhythms of Victorian poetry seem to me to be of this kind ; they show sometimes the skill of the artist, sometimes of the classical or romantic technician, of the prestigious melodist or harmonist, sometimes the power of the vigorous craftsman or even the performer of robust metrical feats. All kinds of instrumental faculties have been active ; but the one thing that is lacking, except in moments or brief periods of inspiration, is the soul behind creating and listening to its own greater movements.

Poetic rhythm begins to reach its highest levels, the greater poetic movements become possible when rising from and beyond any of these powers the soul begins to make its direct demand and yearn for a profounder satisfaction : they awake when the inner ear begins to listen. Technically, we may say that this comes in when the poet becomes, in Keats' phrase, a miser of sound and syllable, economical of his means, not in the sense of a niggardly sparing, but of making the most of all its possibilities of sound. It is then that poetry gets farthest away from the method of prose-rhythm. Prose-rhythm aims characteristically at a general harmony in which the parts are subdued to get the tone of a total effect ; even the sounds which give the support or the relief, yet to a great extent seem to be trying to efface themselves in order not to disturb by a too striking particular effect the general harmony which is the whole aim. Poetry on the contrary makes much of its beats and measures ; it seeks for a very definite and insistent rhythm. But still, where the greater rhythmical intensities are not pursued, it is only some total effect that predominates and the rest is subdued to it. But in these highest, intensest rhythms every sound is made the most of, whether in its suppression or in its swelling expansion, its narrowness or its open wideness, in order to get in the combined effect something which the ordinary flow of poetry cannot give us.

But this is only the technical side, the physical means by which the effect is produced. It is not the artistic intelligence or the listening physical ear which is most at work, but something within trying to bring out an echo of hidden harmonies, a secret of rhythmical infinities within us. It is not a labour of the devising intellect or the

aesthetic sense which the poet has achieved, but a labour of the spirit within itself to cast something out of the surge of the eternal depths. The other faculties are there in their place, but the conductor of the orchestral movement is the soul coming forward to get its own work done by its own higher and unanalysable methods. The result is something as near to wordless music as word-music can get, and with the same power of soul-life, of soul-emotion, of profound supra-intellectual significance. In these higher harmonies and melodies the metrical rhythm is taken up by the spiritual ; it is filled with or sometimes it seems rolled away and lost in a music that has really another and spiritual secret of movement.

This is the intensity of poetic movement out of which the greatest possibility of poetic expression arises. It is where the metrical movement remains as a base, but either enshrines and contains or is itself contained and floats in an element of greater music which exceeds it and yet brings out all its possibilities, that the music fit for the mantra makes itself audible. It is the triumph of the spirit over the difficulties and limitations of its physical instrument. Its listener seems to be that eternal spirit whom the Upanishad speaks of as the ear of the ear, he who listens to all hearings ; and " behind the instabilities of word and speech " it is the inevitable harmonies of his own thought and vision for which he is listening.

A. G.

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XLII

EXCLUSIVE CONCENTRATION OF TAPAS

Since Brahman is in phenomenon of his universal being a unity and a multiplicity aware of each other and in each other and in his reality he is something beyond the one and the many, containing both, aware of both, Ignorance can only come about as a subordinate phenomenon by some concentration of consciousness either in the one to the exclusion of the many, or of all the many to the exclusion of the one, or of some among the many to the exclusion both of the one and the rest of the many ; or else it is really—and this is the hypothesis we adopt—by some general rule of exclusive concentration, a concentration of separative active consciousness in a separative movement not in the self, but in the force of active being, in Prakriti. This hypothesis we adopt in preference to the others, because none of the others taken by itself will hold or will square with all the facts of existence. Integral Brahman cannot be in his integrality the source of the ignorance, because his integrality is in its very nature all-consciousness. The One cannot really in its conscious being exclude the many, because the many would not then at all exist. The Many in its integrality or even in each one of the many cannot be really ignorant of the One or of others, because by the

Many we mean the same divine Self in all, individualised indeed, but still one in conscious being with all and one too with its own original being. Ignorance is therefore not the natural character of the consciousness of the soul, even of the individual soul, but of some peculiar action in the executive conscious-force of its being absorbed in its works and forgetful of the realities of the soul. This action cannot be that of the whole being or of the whole force of being,—for the character of that is whole consciousness and not partial consciousness,—but of a superficial or partial movement absorbed in a superficial or partial action of the consciousness or the energy.

We can see what this means and to what it amounts when we look at the nature of exclusive concentration in man, in our own consciousness. First of all we note that what we mean ordinarily by the man, is not his inner self, but only a sum of continuous movement of consciousness and energy in past, present and future to which we give this name. It is this that apparently does all the works of the man, thinks all his thoughts, feels all his emotions. This energy is a movement of Tapas concentrated on a temporal stream of inward and outward workings. But we know that behind this stream of energy there is a whole sea of consciousness which is aware of the stream, but of which the stream is unaware. That sea is the subliminal self, the superconscient, subconscious, entirely circumconscient being, the soul; the stream is the natural, the superficial man. In this superficial man Tapas is concentrated on the surface in a certain mass of superficial workings; all the rest of itself it has put behind and is vaguely aware of it there in the back of its conscious being, but is not aware of it in this superficial absorbed movement in front. It is not precisely ignorant of itself in any essential sense of the word, but for the purposes of its superficial movement and within that movement only it is oblivious of its real, its greater self,

by absorption, by exclusive concentration on what it is superficially doing. Yet it is really the hidden sea and not the superficial stream which is doing all this action : it is the sea that is the source of this movement, not the conscious wave it throws up, whatever the consciousness of the wave, absorbed in its movement, living in that, seeing nothing else but that, may think about the matter. And that sea, the real self, the integral conscious being, the integral force of being, is not ignorant ; even the wave is not essentially ignorant,—for it contains within itself all the consciousness it has forgotten and could not but for that act or endure at all,—but it is self-oblivious, too absorbed in its own movement to note anything else but that while that continues to preoccupy it. A limited practical self-oblivion, not an essential and binding self-ignorance is the nature of this exclusive concentration.

So too we see that man, though a really indivisible stream of Tapas, of conscious energy in Time, capable of acting in the present only by the sum of his past force of working, creating already his future by his past and his present action, yet lives absorbed in the present moment, lives from moment to moment and is therefore in this superficial action of consciousness ignorant of his future and ignorant of his past except for that small part of it which at any moment he may recall to him by memory. He does not, however, live in the past ; what he recalls is not the past itself, but only the ghost of it, a conceptual shadow of a reality which is now to him dead, non-existent, no longer in being. But all this is an action of the superficial ignorance. The true consciousness within is aware of its past ; it holds it there still active, living, ready with its fruits, and sends it up from time to time in memory and result to the superficial conscious being,—that is indeed the true rationale of what is called Karma : it is aware too of the future, for it lives indivisibly in the three times and contains all their apparent divisions. Here

then, in this habit of living in the present, we have a second absorption, a second exclusive concentration which complicates and farther limits the being, but simplifies the apparent course of the action by relating it not to the whole infinite course of Time, but to a definite succession of moments.

Therefore in his superficial mind man is to himself the man of the moment, not the man of the past who he once was but who is no longer in existence, nor the man of the future, who is not yet in being ; it is only by memory that he links himself with the one, by anticipation with the other. Yet all the time this existence in the moment is not the real truth of his being, but only a practical truth (*vyañahârika*) for the purposes of the superficial movement of his life and within its limits. It is a truth, not an unreality, but a truth only in its positive part ; in its negative parts it is an ignorance, and this negative ignorance limits and distorts even the practical truth, so that the conscious life of man proceeds according to an ignorance, a false knowledge, not according to the real truth of himself of which he is oblivious. Yet because his real self is the true determinator and governs all secretly from behind, it is after all a knowledge behind which really determines the course of his existence ; and the superficial ignorance only supplies certain factors by which the colour and turn needed for his present human life is given to his consciousness and his action. In the same way and for the same reason man identifies himself only with the name and form he wears in his present existence ; he is ignorant of his past before birth even as of his future after death. Yet all that he forgets is contained, present and effective in the all-remembering integral consciousness within him.

But this is not all. The superficial man living from moment to moment plays, as it were, several parts in his present life and, while he is busy with each part, he is

capable of an exclusive concentration, an absorption in it, by which he forgets the rest of himself, puts it behind him for the moment, is to that extent self-oblivious. The man is for the moment the actor, the poet, the soldier or whatever else he may have been constituted and formed into by some peculiar and characteristic action of his force of being, his Tapas, his past conscious energy and by the action which develops from it. Not only is he apt to deliver himself up to this exclusive concentration in a part of himself for the time being, but his success in the action very largely depends on the completeness with which he can thus put aside all the rest of himself and live only in his immediate work. Yet all the time we can see that it is the whole man who is really doing the action and not merely this particular part of him ; what he does, the way he does it, the elements he brings into it, the stamp he gives to his work depends on his whole character, mind, information, genius, all that the past of him has made him,—and not his past in this life only, but in other lives, and again not only his past, but the past, the present and the predestined future both of himself and the world around him are the determinants of his work. The present actor, poet or soldier in him is only a separative determination of his Tapas ; it is his conscious force of being organised for a particular kind of action of its energy, a separative movement of Tapas which is able,—and this ability is not a weakness, a deficiency, but a great power of the consciousness,—to absorb itself in that particular working to the temporary self-oblivion of the rest of itself, even though that rest is present all the time at the back of the consciousness and in the work itself and is active in the shaping of the work. It is true that this active self-oblivion of the man in his work and the part he plays, differs from the others in that the wall of separation is less phenomenally complete; it can go back from its work at any time to the consciousness of the lar-

ger self of which it is a partial action. The superficial or apparent man cannot so go back at will to the real man within him ; he can only do it abnormally, in exceptional conditions of his mentality or as the fruit of a long and arduous self-training, self-deepening, self-heightening, self-expansion. Still he can go back ; therefore the difference is phenomenal only, not essential : it is, in essence, in both cases the same movement of exclusive concentration, of absorption in a particular aspect of himself, action, movement of force, though with different circumstances and another manner of working.

This power of exclusive concentration is not confined to absorption in a particular character or type of working in one's larger self, but extends to a complete self-forgetfulness in the particular action in which we happen at the moment to be engaged. The actor in moments of great intensity forgets that he is an actor and becomes the part that he is playing on the stage ; not that he really thinks himself Rama or Ravana, as the case may be, but that he identifies himself for the time being with the form of character and action which the name represents and so completely as to forget the real man who is playing it. So the poet forgets himself, the man, the worker, in his work and is for the moment only the inspired impersonal energy which works itself out in formation of word and rhythm, of all else he is oblivious. The soldier forgets himself in the act and becomes the charge and the fury and the slaying. In the same way the man who is overcome by intense anger, forgets himself, as it is commonly said, becomes anger, as it has been forcibly put ; and these terms express a real truth which is not the whole truth of the man's being at the time, but a practical fact of his conscious energy in action. He does forget himself, forgets all the rest of himself with its other impulses and powers of self-restraint and self-direction, so that he acts simply as the energy of the passion which preoccupies him, becomes that energy

for the time being. This is as far as self-forgetfulness can go in active human psychology ; for it must return soon to the wider self-aware consciousness of which this self-forgetfulness is only a temporary movement.

But in the larger universal consciousness there must be a power of carrying this movement to its absolute point, to the greatest extreme possible for any relative movement to reach, and this point is reached, not in human unconsciousness which always refers back to the awakened conscious being which man normally and characteristically is, but in the inconscience of material Nature. This inconscience is no more real than the ignorance of exclusive concentration in our temporary being which limits the waking consciousness of man ; for as in us, so in the atom the metal, the plant, in every form of material Nature, in every energy of material Nature, there is, we know, a secret soul, a secret will, a secret intelligence at work, other than ours, the Conscient in inconscient things of the Upanishad, *chetano achetaneshu*, without whose presence and informing conscious-force or Tapas no work of Nature could be done. What is inconscient there, is simply the Prakriti, the formal, the motionless action of the energy absorbed in the working, identified with it, to such an extent as to be bound in a sort of trance or swoon of concentration, unable to go back, while imprisoned in that form, to its real self, to the integral conscious being and the integral force of conscious being which it has put behind it, of which in its ecstatic trance of mere working and energy it has become oblivious.

The inconscience is superficial like the ignorance of the waking human mind or the inconscience or subconsciousness of his sleeping mind, and within it is the All-conscient ; it is entirely phenomenal, but it is the complete phenomenon. So complete is it that it is only by an impulsion of evolutionary consciousness into other

forms less imprisoned by this unconscious method of working that it can come back to itself, recover first in the plant and the animal a partially, then in man at his highest some possibility of approach to a completely self-conscious working. But still, as in the case of the superficial and the real man, where there is also a similar though lesser inability, the difference is phenomenal only. Essentially, in the universal order of things, the unconscious of material Nature is the same exclusive concentration, the same absorption in the work and the energy as in the self-limitation of the waking human mind, or the concentration of the self-forgetting mind in its working; it is only that self-limitation carried to a farthest point of self-forgetfulness which becomes not a temporary action, but the law of its action. Nescience of Nature is the complete self-ignorance; the partial knowledge and general ignorance of man is a partial self-ignorance marking in her order a return towards self-knowledge; but both are and all ignorance is, when examined, a superficially exclusive, self-forgetful concentration of Tapas, of the conscious energy of being in a particular line of its movement, of which alone it is conscious on the surface. The ignorance is effective within the bounds of that movement and valid for its purposes, but phenomenal, partial, superficial, not real, not integral. We have to use the word real necessarily in a quite limited and not in its absolute sense; for the ignorance is real enough, but it is not the whole truth of our being and by regarding it by itself even its truth is misrepresented to our consciousness.

This being the root-nature of the ignorance, a practical truth of phenomenally, but not really dividing, limiting, separative conscious energy absorbed in its works to the apparent forgetfulness of its integral and real self, we may answer the questions that arise of the why, the where and the how of this movement. The reason for the Ignorance,

its necessity, becomes clear enough once we have seen that without it the object of the manifestation of the world would be impossible, could not be done at all, or not completely, or not in the way in which it should be and is done. Each side of the sevenfold Ignorance has its justification, which is only a part of the one general necessity. Man, living in his timeless being, could not have thrown himself into the stream of Time with that movement of subjection to its flux from moment to moment which is the nature of his present living. Living in his superconscient or subliminal self, he could not have worked out from the knot of his individual mentality the relations which he has to ravel and unravel with the world about him, or would have to do it in a radically different fashion. Living in the universal self and not in the egoistic separative consciousness, he could not evolve that separate action, personality, outlook from himself as the sole or the initial centre and point of reference which is the contribution of the ego-sense to the world-workings. He has to put on the temporal, the psychological, the egoistic ignorance in order to protect himself against the light of the infinite and the largeness of the universal, so as to develop behind this defence his temporal individuality in the cosmos. He has to live as if in this one life and put on the ignorance of his infinite past and his future ; for otherwise, if the past were present to him, he could not work out his present selected relations with his environment in the way intended ; his knowledge would be too great for him ; it would necessarily alter the whole spirit and balance and form of his action. He has to live in the mind absorbed by this bodily life and not in the supermind ; for otherwise all these protecting walls of ignorance created by the limiting, dividing, differentiating power of mind would not be built or would become too thin and transparent for his purpose.

That purpose for which all this exclusive concentra-

tion we call the ignorance is necessary, is to trace the cycle of self-oblivion and self-discovery for the joy of which the ignorance is assumed. It is not that all cosmic manifestation would otherwise become impossible ; but it would be a quite different manifestation from the one in which we live, it would be confined to the higher worlds of the divine Ananda and this obverse manifestation would be impossible. What is here the goal, would be then the eternal condition of existence. It is to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being and his nature that Sachchidananda descends into the material Nescience and puts on its phenomenal ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his conscious energy self-forgetful and absorbed in its works and forms. It is in those forms that the slowly awaking soul has to accept the phenomenal action of an ignorance which is really knowledge awaking progressively out of the original nescience, and it is in the new conditions created by these workings that it has to rediscover itself and divinely transform by that light the life which is thus labouring to fulfil the purpose of its descent into the inconscience. Not to return as speedily as may be to heavens where perfect light and joy are eternal or to the supracosmic bliss is the object of this cosmic cycle, nor merely to repeat a purposeless round in a long unsatisfactory groove of ignorance seeking for knowledge and never finding it perfectly,—in that case the ignorance would be either an inexplicable blunder of the All-conscient or a painful and purposeless Necessity equally inexplicable,—but to realise the Ananda of the Self in other conditions than the supracosmic, in cosmic being, and to find its heaven of joy and light even in the oppositions offered by the terms of embodied existence, by struggle therefore to the joy of self-discovery, would seem to be the true object of the birth of the soul in the human body and of the labour of the human race in the series of its cycles. The ignorance

is a necessary, though quite subordinate term which the universal Knowledge has imposed on itself that that movement might be possible, not a blunder and a fall, but a purposeful descent, not a curse, but a divine opportunity.

The ignorance, we see, is not in the secret soul, but in the apparent Prakriti ; nor does it belong to the whole of that Prakriti,—it cannot, for Prakriti is the action of the All-conscient,—but arises in some development from its original integrality of light and power. Where does that development take place, in what principle of being does it find its opportunity and starting-point ? Not certainly in the infinite being, the infinite consciousness, the infinite delight which are the supreme planes of existence and from which all else derives or descends. There it can have no place. Not in the supermind ; for in the supermind the infinite light and power are always present even in the most finite workings, and the consciousness of unity embraces the consciousness of diversity. It is on the plane of mind that this putting back of the real self-consciousness becomes possible. For mind is that power of the conscious being which differentiates and runs along the lines of differentiation with the sense of diversity prominent and characteristic and the sense of unity behind it only, not characteristic, not the very stuff of its workings. If by any chance this supporting sense of unity could be drawn back,—it is possessed by mind not in its own right, but because it has the supermind behind it, because it reflects the light of the supermind of which it is a derivative and secondary power,—if a veil could fall between mind and supermind shutting off the light of the Truth or letting it come through only in rays diffused, scattered, reflected but with distortion and division, then the phenomenon of the Ignorance would intervene. Such a veil exists, says the Upanishad, constituted by the action of the mind itself ; it calls it the golden lid which hides the face of the Truth. That action is the absorbed looking

downward of mind on the diversity which is its characteristic action and away from the unity which that diversity expresses, until it forgets altogether to remember and support itself by the unity. Even then the unity supports it and makes its action possible, but the absorbed mind is unaware of its own origin and greater, real self. Since it forgets that from which it derived because of absorption in the workings of the energy, it becomes so far identified with that energy as to lose hold even on itself, to become absorbed in the trance of the workings which it still supports in its somnambulist action, but of which it is no longer aware. This is the last stage of the descent of consciousness, the sleep of consciousness which is the basis of the action of material Nature.

But still, even if this is the mechanism of the Ignorance, it may be asked whether it does not remain a mystery how the All-conscious could, though in only a partial action of his conscious energy, succeed in arriving at even this superficial ignorance and inconscience. Even if it were so, it would be worth while to fix the exact action of this mystery, its nature, its limits, so that we may not be appalled by it and misled from the real purpose it serves and the opportunity it gives. But the mystery is a fiction of the dividing intellect which because it finds a logical opposition between two concepts, thinks there is a real opposition of the two facts observed and therefore an impossibility of coexistence and unity between them. This ignorance is, as we have seen, really a power of the knowledge to limit itself, to concentrate itself on the work in hand, an exclusive concentration in practice which does not prevent the full existence and working of the whole conscious being behind in reality. All self-limitation is a power for its special purpose, not a weakness ; all concentration is a force of conscious being, not a disability. It is true that while the Supermind is capable of a comprehensive, multiple, infinite self-concentration, this is divid-

ing and limited ; it is true also that it creates perverse and partial and in so far false values of things ; but we have seen the object of the limitation and of this partiality of knowledge ; and the object being admitted, the power to fulfil it must be admitted also in the absolute force of the absolute Being. This power of self-limitation for a particular working, instead of being incompatible with the absolute conscious-force of that Being, is precisely one of the powers we should expect to exist among its energies.

The Absolute is not really limited by putting forth in himself a cosmos of relations ; it is the natural play of his absolute being, consciousness, force, self-delight. The Infinite is not limited by building up in itself an infinite series of interplaying finite phenomena ; rather that is its natural self-expression. The One is not limited by its capacity for multiplicity in which it enjoys variously its own being ; rather that is part of the true description of an infinite as opposed to a rigid, finite and conceptual unity. So too the ignorance, considered as a power of manifoldly self-absorbed and self-limiting concentration of the conscious being, is a natural capacity of variation in his self-conscious knowledge, one of the possible relations of the Absolute in its manifestation, of the Infinite in its series of finite workings, of the One in its self-enjoyment in the many. The power by self-absorption to become ignorant of the world which yet at the same time continues in his being, is one extreme of this capacity ; the power by absorption in his workings to become ignorant of the self which all the time is carrying on those workings, is the reverse extreme. But neither really limits the integral self-aware existence of Sachchidanānda which is superior to these apparent oppositions.

Essays on the Gita

KNOWLEDGE AND EQUALITY

Yoga and knowledge are, in this early part of the Gita's teaching, the two wings of the soul's ascent. By Yoga is meant union through divine works done without desire, with equality of soul to all things and all men, as a sacrifice to the Supreme, while knowledge is that on which this desirelessness, this equality, this power of sacrifice is founded. The two wings indeed assist each other's flight ; acting together, yet with a subtle alternation of mutual aid, like the two eyes in a man, which see together because they see alternately, they increase one another mutually by an interchange of substance. As the works grow more and more desireless, equal-minded, sacrificial in spirit, the knowledge increases ; with the increase of the knowledge the soul becomes firmer in the desireless, sacrificial equality of its works. The sacrifice of knowledge, says the Gita therefore, is greater than any material sacrifice. " Even if thou art the greatest doer of sin beyond all sinners, thou shalt cross over all the crookedness of evil by the boat of knowledge...There is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge." By knowledge desire and its first-born child, sin, are destroyed. The liberated man is able to do works as a sacrifice because he is freed from attachment through his mind, heart and spirit being firmly founded in knowledge, *gata-saṅgasya juṣṭādvasthita-chetasah*. All his work disappears completely as soon as done, suffers *laya*, as one might say, in the being of the Brahman, *pravilīyate* ; it

has no reactionary consequence on the soul of the apparent doer. The work is done by the Lord through his Nature, it is no longer personal to the human instrument. The work itself becomes but power of the nature and substance of the being of the Brahman.

It is in this sense that the Gita speaks of all the totality of work finding its completion, culmination, end in knowledge, *sarvam karmākhilam jñāne parasamāpyate*. "As a fire kindled turns to ashes its fuel, so the fire of knowledge turns all works to ashes." By this it is not meant that when knowledge is complete, there is cessation from works. What is meant is made clear by the Gita when it says that he who has destroyed all doubt by knowledge, has by Yoga given up all works and is in possession of the Self, is not bound by his works, *yoga-sannyasta-karmānam ātmavantaṁ na karmāni nibadhnanti*, that he whose self has become the self of all existences, acts and yet is not affected by his works, is not caught in them, receives from them no soul-ensnaring reaction, *kurvann api na liṅyate*. Therefore, it says, the Yoga of works is better than the physical renunciation of works, because while Sannyasa is difficult for embodied beings who must do works so long as they are in the body, Yoga of works is entirely sufficient and rapidly brings the soul to Brahman. That Yoga of works is, we have seen, the offering of all action to the Lord, which brings as its culmination an inner and not an outer, a spiritual, not a physical giving up of works into the Brahman, into the being of the Lord, *brahmani ādhāya karmāni, mayi sannyasya*. When works are thus "reposed on the Brahman," the personality of the instrumental doer ceases; though he acts, he does nothing; for he has given up not only the fruits of his works, but the works themselves and the doing of them to the Lord. The Divine then takes the burden of works from him; the supreme Self becomes the doer and the act and the result.

Always in this sense of a supreme self-knowledge is this word *jñāna* used in Indian philosophy and Yoga ; it is the light by which we grow into our true being, not the knowledge by which we increase our information and our intellectual riches ; it is not scientific or psychological or philosophic or ethical or aesthetic or worldly and practical knowledge. These too no doubt help us to grow, but only in the becoming, not in the being ; they enter into the definition of Yogic knowledge only when we use them as aids to know the Supreme, the Self, the Divine,—scientific knowledge, when we can get through the veil of processes and phenomena and see the one Reality behind which explains them all ; psychological knowledge, when we use it to know ourselves and to distinguish the lower from the higher, so that this we may renounce and into that we may grow ; philosophical knowledge, when we turn it as a light upon the essential principles of existence so as to discover and live in that which is eternal ; ethical knowledge, when by it having distinguished sin from virtue we put away the one and rise above the other into the pure innocence of the divine nature ; aesthetic knowledge, when we discover by it the beauty of the Divine ; knowledge of the world, when we see through it the way of the Lord with his creatures and use it for the service of the Divine in man. Even then they are only aids ; the real knowledge is that which is a secret to the mind, of which the mind only gets reflections, but which lives in the spirit.

The Gita in describing how we come by this knowledge, says that we get first initiation into it from the men of knowledge who have *seen*, not those who know merely by the intellect, its essential truths ; but the actuality of it comes from within ourselves : " the man who is perfected by Yoga, finds it of himself in the self by the course of Time," it grows within him, that is to say, and he grows into it as he goes on increasing in desirelessness, in equa-

lity, in devotion to the Divine. It is only of the supreme knowledge that this can be said ; the knowledge which the intellect of man amasses, is gathered laboriously by the senses from outside. To get this knowledge we must have conquered and controlled our mind and senses, *sanyatendriyah*, so that we are no longer subject to their delusions ; we must have fixed our whole conscious being on the truth of that supreme reality in which all exists, *atparah*.

Finally, we must have a faith which no intellectual doubt can be allowed to disturb, *çraddhâvân labhate jñānam*. "The ignorant who has not faith, the soul of doubt goeth to perdition ; neither this world, nor the supreme world, nor any happiness is for the soul full of doubts." In fact, it is true that without faith nothing can be achieved either for this world or for the world above, and that it is only by laying hold of some sure basis and positive support that man can attain any measure of success and satisfaction and happiness ; the merely sceptical mind loses itself in the void. But still in the lower knowledge doubt and scepticism have their temporary uses ; in the higher they are stumblingblocks : for there the whole secret is not the balancing of truth and error, but a constantly progressing realisation of revealed truth. In intellectual knowledge there is always a mixture of falsehood or incompleteness which has to be got rid of by subjecting the truth itself to sceptical inquiry ; but in the higher knowledge falsehood cannot enter and that which intellect contributes by attaching itself to this or that opinion, cannot be got rid of by mere questioning, but will fall away of itself by persistence in realisation. Whatever incompleteness there is in the knowledge attained, it must be got rid of, not by questioning what has already been realised, but by proceeding to further and more complete realisation through a deeper, higher and wider living in the Spirit. And what is not yet

realised must be prepared for by faith, not by sceptical questioning because this truth is one which the intellect cannot give and which is indeed often quite opposed to the ideas in which the reasoning and logical mind gets entangled : it is not a truth which has to be proved, but a truth which has to be lived inwardly, a greater reality into which we have to grow. Finally, it is in itself a self-existent truth and would be self-evident, if it were not for the ignorance in which we live ; the doubts, the perplexities which prevent us from accepting and following it, arise from that ignorance, from the sense-bewildered, opinion-perplexed heart and mind, living as they do in a lower and phenomenal truth and therefore questioning the higher realities, *ajñāna-sambhūtam hr'istham sañcayam*. They have to be cut away by the sword of knowledge, says the Gita, by the knowledge that realises, and by resorting constantly to Yoga, that is, by living out the union with that Supreme who being known all is known, *yasmīn vijñāte saram vijñātam*.

This higher knowledge is that which the knower of Brahman has when he lives constantly in the Brahman, *brahmanavid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ*. Or again, it is said, this knowledge by which we rise beyond all relapse back into the bewilderment of our mental nature, is "that by which thou shalt see all existences without exception in the Self, then in Me." Elsewhere the Gita puts it more largely, "Equal-visioned everywhere, he sees the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self. He who sees Me everywhere and all and each in Me, is never lost to Me nor I to him. He who has reached oneness and loves Me in all beings, that Yogin, howsoever he lives and acts, is living and acting in Me. O Arjuna, he who sees all equally everywhere as himself, whether it be happiness or suffering, I hold him to be the supreme Yogin." That is the Vedantic knowledge which the Gita holds up constantly before us ; but it is its superiority that

it turns this knowledge into a great practical philosophy of divine living. Always it insists on the relation between this knowledge and karmayoga, and therefore on this knowledge as the basis of a liberated action in the world. Whenever it speaks of knowledge, it turns at once to speak of equality which is its result ; when it speaks of equality, it turns to speak of the knowledge which is its basis. And the equality it enjoins is not merely a static condition of the soul useful for self-liberation ; it is always a basis of works. The peace of the Brahman in the liberated soul for the foundation ; the large, free, equal, world-wide action of the Lord in the liberated nature radiating the power which proceeds from that peace ; by these two made one the Gita synthesises works and knowledge.

We see at once what a profound extension we get here for the ideas which otherwise it has in common with other systems of philosophic, ethical or religious living. Endurance, philosophic indifference, resignation are, we have seen, the foundation of three kinds of equality ; the Gita's truth of knowledge gathers them all up together, but gives them an infinitely profound, a magnificently ample significance. The Stoic knowledge is that of the soul's power of self-mastery by fortitude, an equality attained by a struggle with one's nature, maintained by a constant vigilance and control against its natural rebellions : it gives a noble peace, an austere happiness, but not the supreme joy of the liberated self living not by a rule, but in the pure, easy, spontaneous perfection of its divine being, so that "however it may act and live, it acts and lives in the Divine," because here perfection is not only attained, but possessed in its own right and has no longer to be maintained by effort, for it has become the very nature of the soul's being. The Gita accepts the endurance and fortitude of our struggle with the lower nature as a preliminary movement ; but mastery comes not by our individual strength, but by the union with God,

the merging of the personality in the one divine Person and the loss of the personal will in the divine will. There is a divine Master of Nature and her works, above her though in her, who is our highest and our universal self ; by union with him we enter into a supreme freedom and a supreme mastery. The ideal of the Stoic, the sage who is king because by self-rule he becomes master also of outward conditions, resembles superficially the Vedantic idea of the self-ruler and all-ruler, *śvarâṭ samvâṭ* ; but it is on a lower plane. The Stoic kingship is maintained by a force put upon self and environment ; the entirely liberated kingship of the Yogin exists naturally by the eternal royalty of the divine nature, by union with its unfettered universality, by a finally unforced dwelling in its superiority to the instrumental nature through which it acts. His mastery over things is because he has become one soul with all things. To take an image from Roman institutions, the Stoic freedom is that of the *libertus*, the freedman, who is still really dependent on the power that once held him enslaved ; his is a freedom allowed by Nature because he has merited it. The freedom of the Gita is that of the freeman, the true freedom of the birth into the higher nature, self-existent in its divinity. Whatever he does and however he lives, the free soul lives in the Divine ; he is the privileged child of the mansion, *bâlavat*, who cannot cry or fall because all he is and does is full of the Perfect, the All-blissful, the All-loving, the All-beautiful. The kingdom which he enjoys, *râjyam samv'iddham*, is that of which it may be said, in the pregnant phrase of the Greek thinker, "The kingdom is of the child."

The knowledge of the philosopher is that of the true nature of mundane existence, the transience of outward things, the vanity of the world's differences and distinctions, the superiority of the inner calm, peace, light, self-dependence. It is an equality of philosophic indifference ; it brings a high calm, but not the greater spiritual joy ;

it is an isolated freedom, a wisdom like that of the Lucretian sage high in his superiority upon the cliff-top whence he looks down on men tossed still upon the tempestuous waters from which he has escaped,—in the end something after all aloof and ineffective. The Gita admits the philosophic motive of indifference as a preliminary movement; but the indifference to which it finally arrives, if indeed that inadequate word can be at all applied, has nothing in it of the philosophic aloofness. It is indeed a position of as one seated above, *udāsīnarat*, but as the Divine is seated above, having no need at all in the world, yet does works always and is present everywhere supporting, helping, guiding the labour of creatures. This equality is founded upon oneness with all beings. It brings in what is wanting to the philosophic equality; for its soul is the soul of peace, but also the soul of love. It sees all beings without exception in the Divine, it is one self with the self of all existences and therefore in supreme sympathy with all of them. Without exception, *akṣhena*, not only with all that is good and pleases; nothing and no one, however vile, fallen, criminal, repellent in appearance, can be excluded from this universal, this whole-souled sympathy and spiritual oneness. Here there is no room, not merely for hatred or anger or uncharitableness, but for aloofness, disdain or any petty pride of superiority. A divine compassion for the ignorance of the struggling mind, a divine will to pour forth on it all light and power and happiness there will, be indeed, for the apparent man; but for the divine soul within him there will be more, there will be adoration and love. For from all the Beloved looks forth and cries to us, "This is I," "He who loves Me in all beings,"—what greater word of power for the utmost intensities and profundities of divine and universal love, has been uttered by any philosophy or any religion?

Resignation is the basis of a kind of religious equality, submission to the divine will, a patient bearing of the

cross, a submissive forbearance. In the Gita this element takes the more ample form of an entire surrender of the whole being to God. It is not merely a passive submission, but an active self-giving ; not only a seeing and an accepting of the divine will in all things, but a giving up of one's own will to be the instrument of the Master of works, and this not with the idea of being a servant of God, but, eventually at least, by a complete renunciation of the works to him, so that the impersonalised nature becomes only an instrument and nothing else. All result good or bad, pleasing or unpleasing, fortunate or unfortunate, is accepted as belonging to the Master of our actions, so that finally not only are grief and suffering borne, but they are banished : a perfect equality of the emotional mind is established. There is no assumption of personal will in the instrument ; it is seen that all is already worked out in the omniscient prescience and omnipotent effective power of the universal Divine and that the egoism of men cannot alter the workings of that Will. Therefore, the final attitude is that enjoined on Arjuna in a later chapter, "All has been already done by Me in my divine will and foresight ; become only the occasion, O Arjuna," *nimitta-mâtram bhava saavyasâchin*. This attitude must lead finally to an absolute union of the personal with the Divine Will, and with the growth of knowledge to a faultless response of the instrument to the divine Power and Knowledge,—a perfect, an absolute equality of self-surrender, the mentality a passive channel of the divine Light and Power, the active being a mightily effective instrument for its work in the world, will be the poise of this supreme union of the Transcendent, the universal and the individual.

Equality too there will be with regard to the action of others upon us. Nothing that they can do, will alter the inner oneness, love, sympathy which arises from the perception of the one self in all, the Divine in all beings.

But a resigned forbearance and submission to them and their deeds will be no necessary part of the action : it cannot be, since instrumental obedience to the divine and universal Will must mean in the shock of forces in the world a conflict with personal wills which seek rather their own egoistic satisfaction. Therefore Arjuna is bidden to resist, to fight, to conquer ; but without hatred or personal desire or personal enmity or antagonism, since to the liberated soul these feelings are impossible. To act for the *lokasangraha*, impersonally for the keeping and leading of the peoples on the path to the divine goal, is a rule which rises necessarily from the oneness of the soul with the Divine, the universal Being, nor does it conflict with our oneness with all beings, even those who present themselves as opponents and enemies. For the divine goal is their goal also, since it is the secret aim of all, even of those whose outward minds, misled by ignorance and egoism, would wander from the path and resist the impulsion. Resistance and defeat are the best outward service that can be done to them. By this perception the Gita avoids the limiting conclusion which might have been drawn from a doctrine of equality impracticably overriding all relations and of a weakening love without knowledge, while it keeps the one thing essential unimpaired. For the soul oneness with all, for the heart universal love, sympathy, compassion, but for the hands freedom to work out impersonally the good not of this or that person only to the detriment of the divine plan, but the purpose of the creation, the progressing welfare and salvation of men, the total good of all existences.

Oneness with God and oneness with all beings, the realisation of a divine unity and the drawing onwards of men towards that oneness, is the law of life which arises from the teachings of the Gita. There can be none greater, wider, more profound. Liberated oneself, to live in this oneness, to help mankind on the path that leads

towards it and meanwhile to do all works for God and mankind and help man also to do with joy and acceptance all the works to which he is called, *kr'itsua-karma-kr'il*, *sarvakarmâni joshayan*, no greater or more liberal rule of divine works can be given. This freedom, this oneness is the secret goal of our human nature and the existence of the race ; it is that to which they must turn for the happiness all mankind is now vainly seeking, when they lift up their eyes and their hearts to see the Divine in them and around, in all everywhere, *sarveshu*, *sarvatra*, and learn that it is in him they live, while this lower nature is only a prison-wall which they must break down so that they may be made one self with God above and God in man and God in the world.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XL

RAJAYOGA

As the body and the Prana are the key of all the closed doors of the Yoga for the Hathayogin, so is the mind the key in Rajayoga. But since in both the dependence of the mind on the body and the Prana is admitted, in the Hathayoga totally, in the established system of Rajayoga partially, therefore in both systems the practice of Asana and Pranayama is included ; but in the one they occupy the whole field, in the other each is limited only to one simple process and in their unison they are intended to serve only a limited and intermediate office. We can easily see how largely man, even though in his being an embodied soul, is in his earthly nature the physical and vital being and how, at first sight at least, his mental activities seem to depend almost entirely on his body and his nervous system. Modern Science and psychology have even held, for a time, this dependence to be in fact an identity ; they have tried to establish that there is no such separate entity as mind or soul and that all mental operations are in reality physical functionings. Even otherwise, apart from this untenable hypothesis, the dependence is so exaggerated that it has been supposed to be an altogether binding condition, and any such thing

as the control of the vital and bodily functionings by the mind or its power to detach itself from them has long been treated as an error, a morbid state of the mind or a hallucination. Therefore the dependence has remained absolute, and Science neither finds nor seeks for the real key of the dependence and therefore can discover for us no secret of release and mastery.

The psycho-physical science of Yoga does not make this mistake. It seeks for the key, finds it and is able to effect the release ; for it takes account of the psychical or mental body behind of which the physical is a sort of reproduction in gross form, and is able to discover thereby secrets of the physical body which do not appear to a purely physical enquiry. This mental or psychical body, which the soul keeps even after death, has also a subtle pranic force in it corresponding to its own subtle nature and substance, — for wherever there is life of any kind, there must be the pranic energy and a substance in which it can work,—and this force is directed through a system of numerous channels, called *nāḍī*, — the subtle nervous organisation of the psychic body,—which are gathered up into six (or really seven) centres called technically lotuses or circles, *chakra*, and which rise in an ascending scale to the summit where there is the thousand-petalled lotus from which all the mental and vital energy flows. Each of these lotuses is the centre and the storing-house of its own particular system of psychological powers, energies and operations,—each system corresponding to a plane of our psychological existence,—and these flow out and return in the stream of the pranic energies as they course through the *nāḍīs*.

This arrangement of the psychic body is reproduced in the physical with the spinal column as a rod and the ganglionic centres as the chakras which rise up from the bottom of the column, where the lowest is attached, to the brain and find their summit in the *brahmarandhra*

at the top of the skull. These chakras or lotuses, however, are in physical man closed or only partly open, with the consequence that only such powers and only so much of of them are active in him as are sufficient for his ordinary physical life, and so much mind and soul only is at play as will accord with its needs. This is the real reason, looked at from the mechanical point of view, why the embodied soul seems so dependent on the bodily and nervous life,—though the dependence is neither so complete nor so real as it seems. The whole energy of the soul is not at play in the physical body and life, the secret powers of mind are not awake in it, the bodily and nervous energies predominate. But all the while the supreme energy is there, asleep ; it is said to be coiled up and slumbering like a snake,—therefore it is called the *kundalinî shakti*,—in the lowest of the chakras, in the *mûlâdhâra*. When by *pranayama* the division between the upper and lower *prana* currents in the body is dissolved, this Kundalini is struck and awakened, it uncoils itself and begins to rise upward like a fiery serpent breaking open each lotus as it ascends until the Shakti meets the Purusha in the *brahma-randhra* in a deep *samadhi* of union.

Put less symbolically, in more philosophical though perhaps less profound language, this means that the real energy of our being is lying asleep and inconscient in the depths of our vital system, and is awakened by the practice of *Pranayama*. In its expansion it opens up all the centres of our psychological being in which reside the powers and the consciousness of what would now be called perhaps our subliminal self ; therefore as each centre of power and consciousness is opened up, we get access to successive psychological planes and are able to put ourselves in communication with the worlds or cosmic states of being which correspond to them ; all the psychic powers abnormal to physical man, but natural to the soul develop in us. Finally, at the summit of the ascension,

this arising and expanding energy meets with the super-conscious self which sits concealed behind and above our physical and mental existence ; this meeting leads to a profound samadhi of union in which our waking consciousness loses itself in the superconscious. Thus by the thorough and unremitting practice of Pranayama the Hathayogin attains in his own way the psychic and spiritual results which are pursued through more directly psychical and spiritual methods in other Yogas. The one mental aid which he conjoins with it, is the use of the mantra, sacred syllable, name or mystic formula which is of so much importance in the Indian systems of Yoga and common to them all. This secret of the power of the mantra, the six chakras and the Kundalini Shakti is one of the central truths of all that complex psycho-physical science and practice of which the Tantric philosophy claims to give us a rationale and the most complete compendium of methods. All religions and disciplines in India which use largely the psycho-physical method, depend more or less upon it for their practices.

Rajayoga also uses the Pranayama and for the same principal psychic purposes as the Hathayoga, but being in its whole principle a psychical system, it employs it only as one stage in the series of its practices and to a very limited extent, for three or four large utilities. It does not start with Asana and Pranayama, but insists first on a moral purification of the mentality. This preliminary is of supreme importance ; without it the course of the rest of the Rajayoga is likely to be troubled, marred and full of unexpected mental, moral and physical perils.* This moral purification is divided in the established sys-

* In modern India people attracted to Yoga, but picking up its processes from books or from persons only slightly acquainted with the matter, often plunge straight into Pranayama of Rajayoga, frequently with disastrous results. Only the very strong in spirit can afford to make mistakes in this path.

tem under two heads, five *yamas* and five *niyamas*. The first are rules of moral self-control in conduct such as truth-speaking, abstinence from injury or killing, from theft etc. ; but in reality these must be regarded as merely certain main indications of the general need of moral self-control and purity. *Yama* is, more largely, any self-discipline by which the rajasic egoism and its passions and desires in the human being are conquered and quieted into perfect cessation. The object is to create a moral calm, a void of the passions, and so prepare for the death of egoism in the rajasic human being. The *niyamas* are equally a discipline of the mind by regular practices of which the highest is meditation on the divine Being, and their object is to create a sattwic calm, purity and preparation for concentration upon which the secure pursuance of the rest of the Yoga can be founded.

It is here, when this foundation has been secured, that the practice of Asana and Pranayama come in and can then bear their perfect fruits. By itself the control of the mind and moral being only puts our normal consciousness into the right preliminary condition ; it cannot bring about that evolution or manifestation of the higher psychic being which is necessary for the greater aims of Yoga. In order to bring about this manifestation the present nodus of the vital and physical body with the mental being has to be loosened and the way made clear for the ascent through the greater psychic being to the union with the superconscient Purusha. This can be done by Pranayama. A-sana is used by the Rajayoga only in its easiest and most natural position, that naturally taken by the body when seated and gathered together, but with the back and head strictly erect and in a straight line, so that there may be no deflection of the spinal chord. The object of the latter rule is obviously connected with the theory of the six chakras and the circulation of the vital energy between the *mûlâdhâra* and the *brahmarandhira*.

The Rajayogic Pranayama purifies and clears the nervous system ; it enables us to circulate the vital energy equally through the body and direct it also where we will according to need, and thus maintain a perfect health and soundness of the body and the vital being ; it gives us control of all the five habitual operations of the vital energy in the system and at the same time breaks down the habitual divisions by which only the ordinary mechanical processes of the vitality are possible to the normal life. It opens entirely the six centres of the psycho-physical system and brings into the waking consciousness the power of the awakened Shakti and the light of the unveiled Purusha on each of the ascending planes. Coupled with the use of the mantra it brings the divine energy into the body and prepares for and facilitates that concentration in Samadhi which is the crown of the Rajayogic method.

Rajayogic concentration is divided into four stages ; it commences with the drawing both of the mind and senses from outward things, proceeds to the holding of the one object of concentration to the exclusion of all other ideas and mental activities, then to the prolonged absorption of the mind in this object, finally, to the complete ingoing of the consciousness by which it is lost to all outward mental activity in the oneness of Samadhi. The real object of this mental discipline is to draw away the mind from the outward and the mental world into union with the divine Being. Therefore in the first three stages use has to be made of some mental means or support by which the mind accustomed to run about from object to object, shall fix on one alone, and that one must be something which represents the idea of the Divine. It is usually a name or a form or a mantra by which the thought can be fixed in the sole knowledge or adoration of the Lord. By this concentration on the idea the mind enters from the idea into its reality, into which it sinks

silent, absorbed, unified. This is the traditional method. There are, however, others which are equally of a Rajayogic character, since they use the mental and psychical being as key. Some of them are directed rather to the quiescence of the mind than to its immediate absorption, as the discipline by which the mind is simply watched and allowed to exhaust its habit of vagrant thought in a purposeless running from which it feels all sanction, purpose and interest withdrawn, and that, more strenuous and rapidly effective, by which all outward-going thought is excluded and the mind forced to sink into itself where in its absolute quietude it can only reflect the pure Being or pass away into its superconscient existence. The method differs, the object and the result are the same.

Here, it might be supposed, the whole action and aim of Rajayoga must end. For its action is the stilling of the waves of consciousness, its manifold activities, *chittavritti*, first, through a habitual replacing of the turbid rajasic activities by the quiet and luminous sattwic, then, by the stilling of all activities ; and its object is to enter into silent communion of soul and unity with the Divine. As a matter of fact we find that the system of Rajayoga includes other objects,—such as the practice and use of occult powers,—some of which seem to be unconnected with and even inconsistent with its main purpose. These powers or *siddhis* are indeed frequently condemned as dangers and distractions which draw away the Yogin from his sole legitimate aim of divine union. On the way, therefore, it would naturally seem as if they ought to be avoided ; and once the goal is reached, it would seem that they are then frivolous and superfluous. But Rajayoga is a psychic science and it includes the attainment of all the higher states of consciousness and their powers by which the mental being rises towards the superconscient as well as its ultimate and supreme possibility of union with the Highest. Moreover, the Yogin, while in

the body, is not always mentally inactive and sunk in Samadhi, and an account of the powers and states which are possible to him on the higher planes of his being is necessary to the completeness of the science.

These powers and experiences belong, first, to the vital and mental planes above this physical in which we live, and are natural to the soul in the subtle body ; as the dependence on the physical body decreases, these abnormal activities become possible and even manifest themselves without being sought for. They can be acquired and fixed by processes which the science gives, and their use then becomes subject to the will ; or they can be allowed to develop of themselves and used only when they come, or when the Divine within moves us to use them ; or else, even though thus naturally developing and acting, they may be rejected in a single-minded devotion to the one supreme goal of the Yoga. Secondly, there are fuller, greater powers belonging to the supramental planes which are the very powers of the Divine in his spiritual and supramentally ideative being. These cannot be acquired at all securely or integrally by personal effort, but can only come from above, or else can become natural to the man if and when he ascends beyond mind and lives in the spiritual being, power, consciousness and ideation. They then become, not abnormal and laboriously acquired siddhis, but simply the very nature and method of his action, if he still continues to be active in the world-existence.

On the whole, for an integral Yoga the special methods of Rajayoga and Hathayoga may be useful at times in certain stages of the progress, but are not indispensable. It is true that their principal aims must be included in the integrality of the Yoga ; but they can be brought about by other means. For the methods of the integral Yoga must be mainly spiritual, and dependence on physical methods or fixed psychic or psycho-physical

processes on a large scale would be the substitution of a lower for a higher action. We shall have occasion to touch upon this question later when we come to the final principle of synthesis in method to which our examination of the different Yogas is intended to lead.

The Eternal Wisdom

TO RENOUNCE ONE'S SELF.

- 1 Whosoever has oneness engraven in his heart, forgets all things and forgets himself.
- 2 It is from the shoot of self-renunciation that there
- 3 starts the sweet fruit of final deliverance.—This liberation is attained by him alone who has understood the lesson of complete disinterestedness and forgetfulness of self.
- 4 Knowledge is better than practice, concentration excels knowledge, the renunciation of fruits concentration ; peace is the immediate result of renunciation.
- 5 To renounce one's self is not to renounce life. —
- 6 None can be richer, more powerful, freer than he who knows how to renounce his self and all things.
- 7 To put an end to care for one's self is a great happiness.— One must begin by annihilating one's self, to be able to kindle within the Flame of existence and be admitted into the paths of Love.
- 9 Not by work, not by family, not by riches, but by renunciation great beings attain to immortality. —
- 10 Only he who lives not for himself, does not perish.—
- 11 Man, every time he gives up and abandons himself,

1) Farid-ul-din-attar.—2) Book of Golden Precepts.—3) Ramakrishna — 4) Bhagavad Gita. XII. 12.—5) Tolstoi.— 6) Imitation of Christ.— 7) Udanavarga.—8) Baha-ullah.—9) Kaivalya Upanishad.—10) Lao-Tse.— 11) J. Tauler.

- finds God in the depths of his heart, as if the im-
- 12 mutable principle of his abnegation.—The individual consciousness by the attempt to measure the Impersonal loses its individual egoism and becomes one with Him.
- 13 Each being who renounces his self and detaches himself completely from it, hears within this voice
- 14 and this echo, "I am God.—Totally to renounce one's self is to become God.
- 15 Therefore regard attentively this ocean of impermanence, contemplate it even to its foundation and labour no more to attain but one sole thing,—the
- 16 kingdom of the Permanent.—Deliver yourself from all that is not your self; but what is it that is not your self? The body, the sensations, the perceptions, the relative differentiations. This liberation will lead you to felicity and peace.
- 17 My brother, a delicate heart is like a mirror; polish it by love and detachment, that the Sun of the Reality may reflect itself in it and the divine Dawn arise.
- 18 Cut away in thee the love of thyself, even as in
- 19 autumn thy hand plucks the lotus.—Root out in thee
- 20 all love of thyself and all egoism.—Above all banish
- 21 the thought of the "I."—Thou shalt have given a drop and won the sea, given thy life and won the well-beloved.

12) Ramakrishna.— 13) Gulschen Raz.— 14) Tolstoi.— 15) Buddhist Texts.— 16) id.— 17) Baha-ullah.— 18) Dhammapada.— 19) Buddhist Texts.—20) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.— 21) Baha-ullah.

The Psychology of Social Development

XX

The collectivist idea of society has at first sight powerful attractions. It founds itself on a great truth that every society is a collective being in which and by which the individual lives and to which he owes all that he can give it and by harmony with this greater social self must find the proper use of his developed powers and activities. Since it is a collective being, it must, one would naturally suppose, have a collective reason and will which will find right expression and the right working if it is given a proper means of organised self-expression and execution. And this collective will and intelligence, being that of all in a perfect equality, could naturally be trusted to seek out and work out its own good where the ruling individual and class would always be liable to misuse their power for quite other ends. The right organisation of social life on a basis of equality would give each man his proper place in society, his full training and development for the common ends, his due share of work, leisure and reward, the right value of his life in relation to the collective being, society, regulated by that, and not an exaggerated or a depressed value brought to him fortuitously by birth or fortune, purchased by wealth or won

by a painful and wasteful struggle. And certainly the efficiency of the community, the measured, ordered and economical working of its life, its power for production and general well-being must enormously increase, as even the quite imperfect development of State action in the recent past has shown.

If it be objected that to bring this about, the liberty of the individual has to be destroyed or reduced to an almost vanishing quantity, it might be answered that the right of the individual to any kind of liberty as against the State which represents the mind, the will, the good and interest of the whole community, is a myth. Secondly, individual liberty of life and action,—liberty of thought and speech being for the present conceded, though whether it will always remain unimpaired when once the socialistic State has laid its grip firmly on the individual, may be doubted,—means in practice an undue freedom given to his infrarational being, which is precisely the thing in him that has to be thoroughly controlled, if not entirely suppressed, so that he may become a reasonable being leading a reasonable life. This control can be most wisely and effectively carried out by the collective reason and will of the State which is larger, better, more enlightened than the individual's, profiting, as it must do, by all the available wisdom and aspiration in the society. Indeed, the enlightened individual may well come to regard this as his own larger mind, will and conscience and find in a willing obedience to it delivery from his own smaller and less rational self and therefore a more real freedom,—as already we find it argued by the Germans that the disciplined German obeying the least gesture of the policeman, the State official, the military officer is really the freest, happiest and most moral individual in all Europe and therefore in the whole world. The State, in fact, educating and governing the individual, undertakes to intellectualise, ethicise, practicalise and

generally perfect him and to see to it that he remains, whether he will or no, always and in all things intellectual, ethical, practical and thoroughly perfect.

The pity of it is that this excellent theory, like the individualist, is pretty sure to stumble over a discrepancy between its set ideas and the actual facts of human nature; for it ignores the complexity of man's being and all that that complexity means, and especially it ignores the soul of man and its supreme need of freedom, of the control also of his lower members, no doubt,—for that is part of the total freedom towards which he is struggling,—but of self-control, not regulation by the mind and will of others. The collective being is a fact; all mankind may be regarded as a collective being; but this being is a soul, not a mind or a body. Each society develops into a sort of sub-soul or group-soul of this humanity and develops also a general temperament, character, type of mind, governing ideas and tendencies which shape its life and its institutions. But the society has no discoverable common reason and will belonging alike to all its members; for the group-soul rather works out its tendencies by a diversity of opinions, a diversity of wills, a diversity of life, and the vitality of the group life depends largely upon the working of this diversity. Therefore, government by the organised State means always government by a number of individuals, whether the number be the minority or the majority; but even when it is the majority that nominally governs, in fact it is always the reason and will of a comparatively few effective men,—and not really any common reason and will of all,—which rules and regulates things by the consent of the half-hypnotised mass; nor is there any reason to suppose that the immediate socialisation of the State would at all alter, the mass of men not being yet thoroughly rationalised and developed minds, this practical necessity of State government.

In the old infra-rational societies, at least in their inception, what governed was not the State, but the group soul itself evolving its life and organising it in customary institutions and self-regulations to which all had to conform, the rulers being only its executors and instruments. This entailed indeed a great subjection of the individual to the society, but it was not felt, because the individualistic idea was yet unborn and such diversities as arose were naturally provided for in one way or another, in some cases by a remarkable latitude of social variation which government by the State tends more and more to suppress. As State government develops, we have a real suppression or oppression of the minority by the majority or the majority by the minority and of the individual by the collectivity. Democratic liberty tried to minimise this suppression and leave a free play for the individual by minimising the role of the State. Collectivism goes exactly to the opposite extreme ; it will leave no sufficient elbow-room to the individual free-will except perhaps in thought and speech, and the more it rationalises the individual by universal education of a highly developed kind, the more this suppression will be felt.

Man needs freedom of life and action in order that he may grow, otherwise he will remain fixed where he was, a stunted and static being. If his individual mind and reason are ill developed, he may consent to grow, as does the infra-rational mind, in the group-soul, in the herd, in the mass, with that subtle half-conscient general evolution common to all in the lower process of Nature. As he develops individual reason and will, he needs and society must give him room for an increasing play of individual freedom and variation, so far as that does not develop itself to the avoidable harm of others and of the society as a whole. Given a full development and free play of the individual mind, the need of freedom will grow with the immense variation which this development

must bring with it, and if only a free play in thought and reason is allowed, but the free play of the intelligent will in life and action is inhibited by the excessive regulation of the life, then an intolerable contradiction and falsity will be created. Men may bear it for a time in consideration of the great and visible new benefits of order, economic development, means of efficiency, scientific satisfaction of the reason which the collectivist arrangement of society will bring, but when its benefits become a matter of course and its defects become more and more realised and prominent, dissatisfaction and revolt are sure to set in in the clearest and most vigorous minds of the society and propagate themselves throughout the community. This intellectual and vital dissatisfaction is likely to take the form of anarchistic thought ; for that thought appeals precisely to this need of free variation in the internal life and its outward expression which will be the source of revolt ; and anarchistic thought must be necessarily subversive of the socialistic order. The State can only combat it by an education adapted to its fixed forms of life which will seek to drill the citizen in a fixed set of ideas, aptitudes, propensities, as was done in the old infra-rational order of things ; but the remedy will be in a rational society self-contradictory, probably ineffective, or if effective, then worse than the evil it seeks to combat.

This is the central defect through which a socialistic State is bound to be convicted of insufficiency and condemned to pass away before the growth of a new ideal. If it continues to be really a government of the life of the individual by the comparatively few and not, as it pretends, by a common will and reason, if, that is to say, it becomes undemocratic or remains pseudo-democratic, then it will be this falsity through which anarchistic thought will attack its existence. But even if the socialistic State becomes really democratic, the expression of

the free reasoned will of the majority in agreement,—but even this is difficult, because collectivism pretends to regulate life not only in its principles and its main lines, but in all its details, a thorough-going scientific regulation, and agreement of the free reasoned will of millions in every detail seems a contradiction in terms,—yet there will still be the suppression or oppression of individual freedom by the will of the majority. There will be something infinitely worse. For a thorough-going scientific regulation of life can only be brought about by a thorough-going mechanisation of life. This tendency to mechanisation is the inherent defect of the State idea and its practice. Already that is the defect upon which both intellectual anarchistic thought and the insight of the spiritual thinker have begun to lay stress, and it must immensely increase as the State idea rounds itself into a greater completeness in practice. It is indeed the inherent defect of reason when it attempts to govern life and by quelling its natural tendencies put it into some kind of rational order.

Life differs from the mechanic order of the physical universe running in the groove of fixed cosmic habits, in that it is the increasing expression of an infinite soul in creatures which becomes more and more aware of its own subtle variations, needs, diversities, involving an immense number of things that seem to be absolute oppositions and contraries. To find some principle of unity, of reconciliation which will enable it to develop itself on a basis of harmony and not of conflict and struggle, is the real business of humanity in its active life-evolution. This can only be done by the soul discovering itself in its highest and completest spiritual reality and effecting a progressive upward transformation of its life-values into those of the spirit ; for there they will all find their spiritual truth and therefore their mutual recognition and reconciliation. The business of reason is to observe and understand this life by the intelligence and discover for

it the direction in which it is going and the laws of its self-development. In doing so it is obliged to adopt temporarily fixed view-points none of which is more than partially true and to create systems none of which can really stand as the final expression of the integral truth of things.

In the realm of thought that does not matter ; for as there the reason does not drive at practice, it is able with impunity to allow the most opposite view-points and systems to exist side by side, to compare them, seek for reconciliations, synthetise in the most various ways, change constantly, enlarge, elevate ; it is free to act without thinking at every point of immediate practical consequences. But when it seeks to govern life, it is obliged to fix its view-point, to crystallise its system ; every change becomes or at least seems a thing doubtful, difficult and perilous, all the consequences of which cannot be foreseen, while the conflict of view-points, principles, systems leads to strife and revolution and not to a basis of harmonious development. It mechanises in order to arrive at fixity of conduct and practice in the fluidity of things : but while mechanism is a sufficient principle in dealing with physical forces, because it is in harmony with the law or dharma of physical Nature, it can never truly succeed in dealing with conscious life, because there it is contrary to its highest dharma. While, then, the attempt at a rational ordering of society is an advance upon the comparative immobility and slow subconscious or half-conscious evolution of infrarational societies and the confusedly mixed movement of semi-rational societies, it can never arrive at perfection by its own methods, because reason is neither the first principle of life, nor can be its last, supreme and sufficient principle.

The question remains whether anarchistic thought supervening upon the collectivistic can any more successfully find a satisfying social principle. It may be contend-

ed that the collectivist period will be at least a necessary stage in social progress. For the vice of individualism is that in insisting upon the free development and self-expression of the life and the mind or the life-soul in the individual, it tends to exaggerate the egoism of the mental and vital being and prevent the recognition of unity with others on which alone a complete self-development and a harmless freedom can be founded. Collectivism at least insists upon that unity by entirely subordinating the life of the isolated ego to the life of the greater group-ego, and its office may be thus to stamp upon the mentality and life-habits of the individual this necessity of unifying his life with the life of others. Afterwards when again the individual asserts his freedom, as some day he must, he may have learned to do it on the basis of this unity and not on the basis of his egoistic life. This is probably the intention of Nature in human society in its movement towards a collectivist principle of social living. Collectivism may itself realise this aim by modifying itself so as to allow for a free individual development on the basis of unity. But to do so it must first spiritualise itself; it cannot do it on the basis of the reason and a mechanically scientific ordering of life.

Anarchistic thought is already developing, though it has not yet found any sure form, in proportion as the pressure of society on the individual increases, a clear sign of something in that pressure which unduly oppresses a necessary element of human perfection. We need not attach much importance to the grosser vitalistic or violent anarchism which seeks forcibly to react against the social principle or claims the right of man to "live his own life" in the egoistic or crudely vitalistic sense. But there is a higher, an intellectual anarchistic thought which aims at recovering and carrying to its furthest logical conclusions a very real truth of nature and of the divine in man. In its revolt against the opposite exaggeration of the social

principle, we find it declaring that all government of man by man by the power of compulsion is an evil, a violation, a suppression or deformation of a natural principle of good which would otherwise grow and prevail for the perfection of humanity. Even the social principle itself is questioned and held liable for a sort of fall in man from a natural to an unnatural and artificial principle of living.

The exaggerations and inherent weakness of this exclusive idea are sufficiently evident. Man does not live as an isolated being, nor can he grow by an isolated freedom. He grows by his relations with others and his freedom must exercise itself in a progressive self-harmonising with the freedom of his fellow-beings. The social principle therefore would be perfectly justified, if by nothing else, then by the need of society as a field of relations which afford to the individual his occasion for growing towards a greater perfection. We have indeed the old dogma that man was originally innocent and perfect, and the conception of the first ideal state of man as an original condition of free and natural living in which no social law or compulsion existed because none was needed, is as old as the Mahabharata. But even this theory has to recognise a fall of man from his natural perfection which was not brought about by the introduction of the social principle in the arrangement of his life, but rather the social principle and the governmental method of compulsion had to be introduced as a result of the fall. If we regard the evolution of man as a growth out of the infra-rational status of his being, it is clear that only by a social compulsion on the vital and physical instincts of his infra-rational egoism, a subjection to the needs and laws of the social life, could this growth have been brought about ; for in their first crudeness the infra-rational instincts do not correct themselves quite voluntarily without the pressure of need and compulsion,

but only by having a law erected other than their own which teaches them finally to erect a yet greater law within for their own correction and purification. The principle of social compulsion may not have been always or perhaps ever used quite wisely ; it is a law of man's imperfection, imperfect in itself, and must always be imperfect in its method and result ; but in the earlier stages of his imperfection it was clearly inevitable, and until man has grown out of the causes of its necessity, he cannot be really ready for the anarchistic principle of living.

But it is at the same time clear that the more the outer law is replaced by an inner law, the nearer man will draw to his true and natural perfection. And the perfect social state must be one in which governmental compulsion is abolished and man is able to live with his fellow-man by free agreement and cooperation. But by what means is he to be made ready for this great consummation ? Intellectual anarchism relies on two powers in the human being of which the first is the natural enlightenment of his reason which will claim freedom for itself, but equally recognise the same right in others and tend to establish a just equation. This might be conceived as sufficient if the life of man could be lived in a predominant isolation with only a small number of points of necessary contact ; but actually it is closely knit with the lives of others and there is a common life, a common work, a common effort and aspiration without which humanity cannot grow to its full height and wideness. To ensure coordination and prevent clash and ~~conflict~~ in this constant contact another power is needed than the enlightened intellect, and anarchistic thought finds this power in a natural human sympathy which, if given free play, will ensure natural cooperation, in what the American poet calls the love of comrades, in the principle of fraternity. A free equality based upon brother-

hood, not on governmental force and social compulsion, is the anarchistic ideal.

This would seem to lead us towards a free communism or else to what is now called communalism; the free consent of the individual to live in a society where the just freedom of his individuality will be recognised, but the surplus of his labour and acquisition will be given to the common good. The severest school of anarchism, however, rejects all compromise with communism. And indeed it is not clear how even this free communalism can be established or maintained without some kind of governmental force and social compulsion or how it can fail to fall away in the end either on one side into a rigorous collectivism or on the other to struggle, anarchy and disruption. For this social idea takes no sufficient account of the infra-rational element in man, the vital egoism in him which defeats in the end all the calculations of reason and undoes its elaborate systems. And if that element is too much overshadowed, cowed and depressed, too much rationalised, then the life of man becomes artificial, top-heavy, poor in the sap of vitality ; if it is not suppressed, it tends in the end to assert itself and derange the plans of the rational side of man, because it contains in itself powers whose right satisfaction or whose final way of transformation reason cannot discover.

Spiritual anarchism comes nearer to the real solution. As it expresses itself at the present day, there is much in it that is exaggerated and imperfect. Its seers seem often to preach an impossible self-abnegation of the vital life and an asceticism which, instead of purifying and transforming the vital being, seeks to suppress and even kill it, thus impoverishing or killing the springs of life itself. They denounce civilisation as a failure because of its vitalistic exaggerations, but set up an opposite exaggeration which might well cure civilisation of its crying faults and uglinesses, but would deprive us also of many

real and valuable gains. But apart from these excesses of a too logical thought and a one-sided impulsion, we seem here in its main principle to be near to the real way out ; the solution lies not in the reason, but in the soul of man, in its spiritual tendencies. Brotherhood, love can be the only sure foundation of a perfect social evolution, no other can replace it ; but brotherhood and love proceeding not by the instincts or the reason where they can be met, baffled or deflected by other instincts and opposite reasonings, nor even by the natural heart of man where there are plenty of other passions to combat it, but by the soul ; the love which is founded upon a deeper truth of our being, the brotherhood which is an expression of the spiritual realisation of unity. For so only can egoism disappear and the true individualism of the unique godhead in each man found itself on the true communism of the equal godhead in humanity ; for it is that whose very nature of diverse oneness it is to realise the perfection of its individual life and being in the life of all, in the universal being.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXXI

By a free world-union we understand a complex unity based on diversity and that diversity based on free self-determination. A mechanical unitarian system would regard in its idea the geographical groupings of men as so many conveniences for provincial division, for the convenience of administration, much in the same spirit as the French Revolution reconstituted France with an entire disregard of old natural and historical divisions. It would regard mankind as one single nation and try to efface the old separative national spirit altogether ; it would arrange its system probably by continents and subdivide the continents by convenient geographical demarcations. In this opposite idea the geographical, the physical principle of union would be quite subordinated to a psychological principle. For not a mechanical division, but a living diversity would be its object. If this object is to be secured, the peoples of humanity must be allowed to group themselves according to their free-will and their natural affinities ; no constraint or force could be allowed to compel an unwilling nation or grouping to enter into or join itself or remain joined to another for the convenience, aggrandisement, political necessity of that other, or even for the general convenience, in disregard of its own wishes. Nations or countries widely divided from each other geographically like England and Canada or

England and Australia might cohere together ; nations closely grouped locally might, on the contrary, choose to stand apart, like England and Ireland or like Finland and Russia. Unity would be the larger principle of life, but freedom would be its foundation-stone.

In a world built on the present political and commercial basis this system of groupings might present often insuperable difficulties or serious disadvantages ; but in the condition of things in which alone a free world-union would be possible, these difficulties and disadvantages would cease to operate. Military necessity of forced union for strength of defence or for power of aggression would be non-existent, because war would no longer be possible ; force for the arbiter of international differences and a free world-union are two quite incompatible ideas and practically could not co-exist. The political necessity would also disappear ; for it is largely made up of that very spirit of conflict and the consequent insecure conditions of international life apportioning predominance in the world to the physically and organically strongest nations out of which the military necessity arose. In a free world-union determining its affairs and settling its differences by agreement or, where agreement failed, by arbitration, the only political advantage of including large masses of men not otherwise allied to each other in a single State would be the greater influence arising from mass and population. But this influence could not work if the inclusion were against the will of the nations brought together in the State ; for then it would rather be a source of weakness and disunion in the international action of the State ; unless indeed it were allowed in the international system to weigh by its bulk and population without regard to the will and opinion of the peoples constituting it,—if, for instance, the population of Finland and Poland were to swell the number of voices which a united Russia could count in the council of nations, but the will, sentiment and opinions

of the Finns and Poles were to be given no means of expression in that mechanical and unreal unity. But this would be contrary to the modern sense of justice and reason and incompatible with the principle of freedom which could alone ensure a sound and peaceful basis for the world-arrangement. Thus the elimination of war and the settlement of differences by peaceful means would remove the military necessity for forced unions ; while the right of every people to a free voice and status in the world would remove its political necessity and advantage. The elimination of war and the recognition of the rights of all peoples are intimately bound up with each other, as has begun to be recognised, though as yet imperfectly, in the present European conflict.

The economical question remains, and it is the sole important problem of a vital and physical order which might possibly present in this kind of world-arrangement any serious difficulties, or in which the advantages of a unitarian system might really outweigh those of this more complex unity. In either, however, the forcible economic exploitation of one nation by another, which is so large a part of the present economical order, would necessarily be abolished. There would remain the possibility of a sort of peaceful economical struggle, a separativeness, a building up of artificial barriers,—a phenomenon, the increase of which is a striking feature of the present commercial civilisation. But it is likely that once the element of struggle were removed from the political field, the stress of the same struggle in the economic field would greatly decrease. The advantages of self-sufficiency and predominance, to which political rivalry, struggle and the possibility of hostile relations now give an enormous importance, would lose much of their stringency, the advantages of a freer give and take would become more easily visible. It is obvious, for example, that an independent Finland would profit much more by encouraging the passage of Russian commerce

through Finnish ports or an Italian Trieste by encouraging the passage of the commerce of the present Austrian provinces than by setting up a barrier between itself and them. An Ireland politically or administratively independent, able to develop its agricultural and technical education and intensification of productiveness, would find a greater advantage in sharing the movement of the commerce of Great Britain than in isolating itself, even as Great Britain would profit more by an agreement with such an Ireland than by keeping her, as at present, as a poor and starving helot on her estate. Throughout the world, the idea and fact of union once definitely prevailing, unity of interests would be more clearly seen and the greater advantage of agreement and mutual participation in a naturally harmonised life over the feverish artificial prosperity created by a stressing of separative barriers. That stressing is inevitable in an order of struggle and international competition ; it would be seen to be prejudicial in an order of peace and union which would make for mutual accommodation. The principle of a free world-union being that of the settlement of common affairs by common agreement, this could not be confined to the removal of political differences and the arrangement of political relations alone, but must naturally extend to economical differences and economical relations as well. To the removal of war and the recognition of the right of self-determination of the peoples the arrangement of the economical life of the world in its new order by mutual and common agreements would have to be added as the third condition of the free union.

There remains the psychological question of the advantage to the soul of humanity, to its culture, to its intellectual, moral, æsthetic, spiritual growth. At present the first great need of the psychological life of humanity is the growth towards a greater unity ; but also its need is that of a living unity, not in the externals of civilisation,

in dress, manners, habits of life, details of political, social and economical order, not a uniformity, which is the unity towards which the mechanical age of civilisation has been driving, but a free development everywhere with a constant friendly interchange, a close understanding, a feeling of our common humanity, its great common ideals and the truths towards which it is driving and a certain unity and correlation of effort in the united human advance. At present it may seem that this is better helped and advanced by many different nations and cultures living together in one political state-union than by their political separateness. Temporarily, this may be true to a certain extent, but let us see within what limits.

The old psychological argument for the forcible inclusion of a subject nation by a dominant people was the right or advantage of imposing a superior civilisation upon one that was inferior or upon a barbarous race. Thus the Welsh and Irish people used to be told that their subjugation was a great blessing to their countries, their languages petty patois which ought to disappear as soon as possible, and in embracing the English speech, English institutions, English ideas, lay their sole road to civilisation, culture and prosperity. The British domination in India was justified by the priceless gift of British civilisation and British ideals, to say nothing of the one and only true religion, Christianity, to a heathen, orientally benighted and semi-barbarous nation. All this is now an exploded myth. We can see clearly enough that the long suppression of the Celtic spirit and Celtic culture, superior in spirituality if inferior in certain practical directions to the Latin and Teutonic, was a loss not only to the Celtic peoples, but to the world. India has vehemently rejected the pretensions to superiority of the British civilisation, culture, religion, while still admitting, not so much the British, as the modern ideals and methods in politics and in the trend to a greater social equality; and it is be-

coming clear now, even, to more well-informed European minds that the Anglicisation of India would have been a wrong not only to India itself, but to humanity.

Still it may be said that if the old principle of the association was wrong, yet the association itself leads eventually to a good result. If Ireland has lost for the most part its old national speech and Welsh has ceased to have a living literature, yet as a large compensation the Celtic spirit is now receiving and putting its stamp on the English tongue spoken by millions throughout the world, and the inclusion of the Celtic countries in the British empire may lead to the development of an Anglo-Celtic life and culture better for the world than the separate development of the two elements. India by the partial possession of the English language has been able to link itself to the life of the modern world and to reshape its literature, life and culture on a larger basis and, now that it is reviving its own spirit and ideals in a new mould, is producing its effect on the thought of the West ; a perpetual union of the two countries and a constant mutual interaction of their culture by this close association would be more advantageous to them and to the world than their cultural isolation from each other in a separate existence.

There is a temporary truth in this idea, though it is not the whole truth of the position, and we have given it full weight in considering the claims of the imperialistic solution or line of advance on the way to unity. But even the elements of truth in it can only be admitted, provided a free and equal union replaces the present abnormal, irritating and falsifying relations. Moreover, these advantages are only valuable as a stage towards a greater unity in which this close association would no longer be of the same importance. For the final end is a common world-culture in which each national culture should be, not merged into or fused with some other culture differing from it in principle or temperament, but evolved to

its full power and profiting to that end by all the others as well as giving its gains and influences to them, all serving by their separateness and their interaction the common aim and idea of human perfection. This would best be served, not by separateness and isolation, of which there would be no danger, but yet by a certain distinctness and independence of life not subordinated to the mechanising force of an artificial unity. Even within the independent nation itself there might be with advantage a tendency towards greater local freedom of development and variation, a sort of return to the vivid local and regional life of ancient Greece and India and mediæval Italy ; for the disadvantages of strife, political weakness and precariousness of the national independence would no longer exist in a condition of things from which the old terms of physical conflict had been excluded, while all the cultural and psychological advantages might be recovered. A world secure of its peace and freedom might freely devote itself to the intensification of its real human powers of life by the full encouragement and flowering of the individual, local, regional, national mind and power in the firm frame of a united humanity.

What precise form the framework might take, it is impossible to forecast and useless to speculate ; only certain now current ideas would have to be abandoned or modified. The idea of a world-Parliament is attractive at first sight because the parliamentary form is that to which our minds are accustomed ; but an assembly of the present unitarian national type could not be the proper instrument of a free world-union of this large and complex kind ; it could only be the instrument of a unitarian world-State. The idea of a world-federation, if by that be understood the Germanic or the American form, would be equally inappropriate to the greater diversity and freedom of national development which this type of world-union would hold as one of its cardinal principles. Rather

some kind of confederation of the peoples for common human ends, for the removal of all causes of strife and difference, for interrelation and the regulation of mutual aid and interchange, yet leaving to each unit a full internal freedom and power of self-determination, would be the right principle of this unity.

But, this being a much looser unity, what would prevent the spirit of separativeness and the causes of clash and difference from surviving in so powerful a form as to endanger the endurance of the principle of unity,—even if that spirit and those causes at all allowed it to reach some kind of sufficient fulfilment? The unitarian ideal, on the contrary, seeks to efface these in their forms and even in their root cause and by so doing would seem to ensure enduring unity. But it may be pointed out in answer that if it is by political ideas and machinery, under the pressure of the political and economical spirit that the unity is brought about, that is to say, by the idea and experience of the material advantages, conveniences, well-being secured by unification, then the unitarian system also could not be sure of durability. For in the constant mutability of the human mind and earthly circumstances new ideas and changes would be inevitable and the suppressed desire to recover the lost element of variability, separateness, independent living would take advantage of them for what would then be considered as a wholesome and necessary reaction. The lifeless unity accomplished would dissolve from the need of life within, as the Roman unity dissolved by its lifelessness in helpless response to a pressure from without, and once again local, regional, national egoism would reconstitute for itself fresh forms and new centres.

On the other hand in a free world-union, though originally starting from the national basis, the national idea would inevitably undergo a radical transformation, might very probably disappear even into a new and less strenu-

ously compact form and idea of group-aggregation which would not be separative in spirit, yet would preserve the necessary element of independence and variation needed by both individual and grouping for their full satisfaction and their healthy existence. Moreover, by emphasising the psychological quite as much as the political and mechanical idea and basis, it would give a freer and less artificial form and opportunity for the secure development of the intellectual and psychological change which could alone give some chance of durability to the unification. That change is the growth first of the idea and religion of Humanity and the psychological modification of life and feeling and outlook which would accustom both individual and group to live in humanity rather than in their individual and group egoism while yet losing nothing of their individual or group power to express in its own way the divinity in Man.

The Future Poetry

STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

Rhythm is the premier necessity of poetical expression because it is the sound-movement which carries on its wave the thought-movement in the word ; and it is the musical sound-image which most helps to fill in, to extend, subtilise and deepen the thought impression or the emotional or vital impression and to carry the sense beyond itself into an expression of the intellectually inexpressible,—always the peculiar power of music. This truth was better understood on the whole or at least more consistently felt by the ancients than by the modern mind and ear, perhaps because they were more in the habit of singing, chanting or intoning their poetry while we are content to read ours, a habit which brings out the intellectual and emotional element, but unduly depresses the rhythmic value. On the other hand modern poetry has achieved a far greater subtlety, fineness and depth of suggestion in style and thought than the ancients,—with perhaps some loss in power, height and simple largeness. The ancients would not so easily as the moderns have admitted into the rank of great poets writers of poor rhythmic faculty or condoned, ignored or praised in really great poets rhythmic lapses, roughnesses and crudities for the sake of their power of style and substance.

In regard to poetic style we have to make, for the purpose of the idea we have in view, the starting-point of the mantra, precisely the same distinctions as in regard to poetic rhythm,—since here too we find actually everything admitted as poetry which has some power of style and is cast into some kind of rhythmical form. But the question is what kind of power and in that kind what intensity of achievement ? There is plenty of poetry signed by poets of present reputation or lasting fame which one is obliged to consign to a border region of half-poetry, because its principle of expression has not got far enough away from the principle of prose expression. It seems to forget that while the first aim of prose style is to define and fix an object, fact, feeling, thought before the appreciating intelligence with whatever clearness, power, richness or other

beauty of presentation may be added to that essential aim, the first aim of poetic style is to make the thing presented living to the imaginative vision, the spiritual sense, the soul-feeling and soul-sight. Where the failure is to express at all with any sufficient power, to get home in any way, the distinction becomes palpable enough and we readily say of such writings that this is verse but not poetry. But where there is some thought-power or other worth of substance attended with some power of expression, false values more easily become current and even a whole literary age may dwell on this borderland or be misled into an undue exaltation and cult for this half-poetry.

Poetry, like the kindred arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, appeals to the spirit of man through significant images, and it makes no essential difference that in this case the image is mental and verbal and not material. The essential power of the poetic word is to make us see, not to make us think or feel ; thought and feeling must arise out of or rather be included in the sight, but sight is the primary consequence and power of poetic speech. For the poet has to make us live in the soul and in the inner mind what is ordinarily lived in the outer mind and the senses, and for that he must first make us see by the soul, in its light and with its deeper vision what we ordinarily see in a more limited and halting fashion by the senses and the intelligence. He is, as the ancients knew, a seer and not merely a maker of rhymes, not merely a jongleur, rhapsodist or troubadour, and not merely a thinker in lines and stanzas. He sees beyond the sight of the surface mind and finds the revealing word, not merely the adequate and effective, but the illumined and illuminating, the inspired and inevitable word, which compels us to see also. To arrive at that word is the whole endeavour of poetic style.

The modern distinction is that the poet appeals to the imagination and not to the intellect. But there are many kinds of imagination ; the objective imagination which visualises strongly the outward aspects of life and things ; the subjective imagination which visualises strongly the mental and emotional impressions they have the power to start in the mind ; the imagination which deals in the play of mental fictions and to which we give the

name of poetic fancy ; the aesthetic imagination which delights in the beauty of words and images for their own sake and sees no farther. All these have their place in poetry, but they only give the poet his materials, they are only the first instruments in the creation of poetic style. The essential poetic imagination does not stop short with even the most subtle reproductions of things external or internal, with the richest or delicatest play of fancy or with the most beautiful colouring of word or image. It is creative, not of either the actual or the fictitious, but of the more and the most real ; it sees the spiritual truth of things,—of this truth too there are many gradations, —which may take either the actual or the ideal for its starting-point. The aim of poetry, as of all true art, is neither a photographic or otherwise realistic imitation of Nature, nor a romantic furbishing and painting or idealistic improvement of her image, but an interpretation by the images she herself affords us not on one, but on many planes of her creation, of that which she conceals from us, but is ready, when rightly approached, to reveal.

This is the true, because the highest and essential aim of poetry, but the human mind arrives at it only by a succession of steps, the first of which seems far enough away from its object. It begins by stringing its most obvious and external ideas, feelings and sensations of things on a thread of verse in a sufficient language of no very high quality. But even when it gets to a greater adequacy and effectiveness, it is often no more than a vital, an emotional or an intellectual adequacy and effectiveness. There is a strong vital poetry which powerfully appeals to our sensations and our sense of life, like much of Byron or the less inspired mass of the Elizabethan drama ; a strong emotional poetry which stirs our feelings and gives us the sense and active image of the passions ; a strong intellectual poetry which satisfies our curiosity about life and its mechanism, or deals with its psychological and other "problems," or shapes for us our thoughts in an effective, striking and often quite resistlessly quotable fashion. All this has its pleasures for the mind and the surface soul in us, and it is certainly quite legitimate to enjoy them and to enjoy them strongly and vividly on our way upward ; but if we rest content with

these only, we shall never get very high up the hill of the Muses.

The style of such poetry corresponds usually to its substance ; for between the word and the vision there tends to be, though there is not by any means perfectly or invariably, a certain equation. There is a force of vital style, a force of emotional style, a force of intellectual style which we meet constantly in poetry and which it is essential to distinguish from the language of the higher spiritual imagination. The forceful expression of thought and sentiment is not enough for this higher language. To take some examples, it is not enough for it to express its sense of world-sorrow in a line of cheap sentimental force like Byron's

There's, not a joy the world can give
like that it takes away,

or to voice an opposite truth in the sprightly-forcible manner of Browning's

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world,

or to strike the balance in a sense of equality with the pointed and ever quotable intellectuality of Pope's

God sees with equal eyes as lord of all
A hero perish or a sparrow fall.

This may be the poetical or half-poetical language of thought and sentiment ; it is not the language of real poetic vision. Note that all three brush the skirts of ideas whose deeper expression from the vision of a great poet might touch the very heights of poetic revelation. Byron's line is the starting-point in the emotional sensations for that high world-pessimism and its spiritual release which finds expression in the Gita's*

Anityam asukham lokam imam prâpya bhajasva mām
and one has only to compare the manner of the two in style and rhythm, even leaving the substance aside, to see the difference between the lesser and the greater poetry. Browning's language rises from a robust cheerfulness of temperament, it does not touch the deeper fountain-heads of truth in us ; an opposite temperament may well smile

* " Thou who hast come to this transient and unhappy world,
• love and turn to Me."

at it as vigorous optimistic fustian. Pope's actually falsifies by its poetical inadequacy that great truth of the Gita's teaching, the truth of the divine equality, because he has not seen and therefore cannot make us see ; his significant images of the truth are, like his perception of it, intellectual and rhetorical, not poetic images.

There is a higher style of poetry than this which yet falls below the level to which we have to climb. It is no longer poetical language of a merely intellectual, vital or emotional force, but instead or in addition a genuinely imaginative style, with a certain, often a great beauty of vision in it whether objective or subjective, or with a certain, often a great but indefinite soul-power bearing up its movement of word and rhythm. It varies in intensity ; for the lower intensity we can get plenty of examples from Chaucer, when he is indulging his imagination rather than his observation, and at a higher pitch from Spenser ; for the loftier intensity we can cite at will for one kind from Milton's early poetry, for another from poets who have a real spiritual vision like Keats and Shelley. English poetry runs, indeed, ordinarily in this mould. But this too is not that highest intensity of the revelatory poetic word from which the mantra starts. It has a certain power of revelation in it, but still the deeper vision is coated up in something more external and sometimes the poetic intention of decorative beauty, sometimes some other deliberate intention of the poetic mind overlays with the more outward beauty, beauty of image, beauty of thought, beauty of emotion, the deeper intention of the spirit within, so that we have still to look for that beyond the image rather than are seized by it through the image. A high pleasure is there, not unspiritual in its nature, but still it is not that point where pleasure passes into or is rather drowned in the pure spiritual Ananda, the ecstasy of the creative, poetic revelation.

That intensity comes where everything else may be present, but all is powerfully carried on the surge of a spiritual vision which has found its inspired and inevitable speech. All or any of the other elements may be there, but they are at once subordinated and transfigured to their highest capacity for poetic light and rapture. This intensity belongs to no particular style, depends on

no conceivable formula of diction. It may be the height of the decorative imaged style as often we find it in Kalidasa or Shakespeare ; it may be that height of bare and direct expression where language seems to be used as a scarcely felt vaulting-board for a leap into the infinite ; it may be the packed intensity of language which uses either the bare or the imaged form at will, but fills every word with its utmost possible rhythmic and thought suggestion. But in itself it depends on none of these things ; it is not a style, but poetic style itself, the Word ; it creates and carries with it its elements rather than is created by them. Whatever its outward forms, it is always the one fit style for the mantra.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XLIII

THE ORDER OF THE WORLDS

The descent of the Soul into the Ignorance is often spoken of as if it were a lapse or a leap out of the super-conscious oneness into the life of mundane Nature and the return appears then as a similar abrupt or violent transit from world-being into the transcendent Silence. This idea of the matter cannot outlive our wider view of the nature of existence.

For either then the eternal individual soul moved by some inexplicable desire arising within it must have sought the adventure of the darkness, taken a plunge out of the Light into the depths of Nescience and drawn the All-soul with it to build there a world based upon the power of the Inconscient, or the eternally omniscient All-soul itself must have suddenly veiled its self-knowledge in this darkness of the Inconscient carrying the individual souls within it to begin their upward evolution through the ascending scale of life and consciousness ; or else, if the individual is only a fiction of the all-consciousness, a creation of its phenomenal ignorance, it must have conceived all these myriads of individual beings by the evolution of names and forms out of an original indiscriminate Prakriti, the indiscriminate stuff of inconscient force which is the first appearance of things.

And in either case we have only two planes of existence ; the material universe created by the Inconscient, by the blind nescience of Force or Nature obeying the inner, unfelt self which governs its somnambulist activities, and the superconscient One to which we return ;— or even we may imagine that there is no superconscient apart from the Soul of the material universe. If we find, as we do find, that there are other planes of conscious being and that there already exist other worlds than the material universe, we must suppose that these have been subsequently created by the evolving Soul in the course of its ascent out of the inconscience. In that case the whole cosmos is an evolution out of the Inconscient either with the material universe as its sole and sufficient stage and scene or else with an ascending scale of worlds, one evolving out of the other, to grade our return. Hitherto, we have proceeded on the opposite view that the cosmos is a self-graded devolution out of the superconscient Sachchidananda.

One branch of the evolutionary hypothesis of creation we can quickly eliminate. The idea of the world having been created by the desire of the individual soul, the Jiva, for an egoistic existence, appeals easily to our imagination, to which owing to the past trend of human thought the individual has always loomed enormously large in the front plan of things and in the premier dimensions of importance. It agrees well enough with a purely idealist philosophy for which the world only exists as a mirage of the individual mind or a sort of theatre created by it for its own play of consciousness. But as we awaken to a sense of the premier importance of the universal and the dependence of the individual upon it, this theory of things becomes an impossibility. We need not indeed ask where this world-creating Jiva was before world at all existed, as we might if we thought that our individual existence was a creation of cosmic Maya or mundane

Prakriti ; we have concluded on the contrary that Sachchidananda is in the very basis of his self-manifestation at once One and Many, and it then becomes conceivable that a desire may have stirred, in some transmundane Infinite, in some of the Many, which, so to speak, precipitated them downward and compelled the creation of this world of the Ignorance. But we have also seen that the One is the premier fact of existence, that the Many depend upon the One, are souls of the One, beings of the Being.

This truth determines also the fundamental principle of the cosmic existence. There we see that the universal precedes the individual, gives it its field, is that in which it exists cosmically. The individual soul lives here by the All-Soul and depends upon it, not the other way round ; for we do not mean by the All-Soul, as do the pluralist believers in the Becoming as the sole fact of existence, a sum of individual beings or a totality created by the conscious life of individuals ; we mean the One supporting the cosmic Force in its works and repeating here by it, modified in the terms of cosmic existence, the primary relation between the One and the Many. It is impossible then that the Many should have independently or by a revolt against the One desired cosmic existence and forced by their revolt the supreme Sachchidananda to descend unwillingly or tolerantly into the Nescience ; that would be to reverse altogether the true dependence of things. If the world was created by the desire of the Many, of the Jiva, there must still have been first a Will in Sachchidananda to that end,—for what becomes desire in the ego is Will in the One,—otherwise the desire could not have arisen. The One, the All-Soul, by whom alone the consciousness of the Jiva is determined, must first accept the veil of inconscient Nature before the Jiva too can put on the veil of the ignorance in the material universe.

Has then the One with the Many involved in him veiled himself in the sole-existing material universe,

become utterly that which we call the Inconscient, though really it is inconscient only in the outward action of Nature, while within it is the source and sum of all consciousness, superconscient only to our partially evolved mentality? And are the beings who people the universe souls of this One born first here and evolving upward through inanimate and vital and mentally developing forms with the recovery of their complete and undivided life in the superconscient One for the goal of their evolution? In that case everything has evolved here, life, mind, spirit, out of the One in the material universe by the force of its hidden being and everything will fulfil itself here in the material universe without the need of help from planes and worlds beyond. But this is inconsistent with the facts of existence that reveal themselves as we grow upward, outward and inward. We find that there are other planes, other worlds, which have a capital influence, exercise a hidden but most powerful pressure upon our life and being in the physical world. We find too that the soul which is man, after the dissolution of his body, does not dwell in the material cosmos,—for it has lost in the body its means of doing that,—but precisely in these other planes and worlds from which it returns to pursue the terrestrial evolution. The progress of the soul proceeds by a commerce, an interchange, a transition and retransition between these higher worlds and the material plane of being.

Are we then to suppose that these higher planes and worlds have been created subsequently to the manifestation of the material cosmos, to aid the evolution or in some sense as a result of it? This is a notion which the modern thinker, starting in all his ideas from the material universe as the one thing which he knows and in some sort has analysed, might easily tend to admit, making the material, the Inconscient the starting-point of all existence, as it is undoubtedly the starting-point

for us of the evolutionary movement for which we are here in the material world. He holds matter and material Force, with whatever indwelling secret Spirit, to be the first thing to exist, because it is the first thing that he knows. But how then were these other worlds created, by what force, by what instrumentality? By the Life and Mind developing out of the Inconscient, some would say, developing these worlds through the consciousness of the living beings who appear in it. Man creates the planes, the vital and mental worlds which he inhabits after death, creates the gods, as the ancient phrase ran. All these then become a sort of myth of the developing consciousness in which it is able to dwell and maintain itself in its own imaginations. It is even said by some that God himself is created by man and a myth of his consciousness. We swing back towards an idealistic view of the universe and all things assume a certain hue of unreality except the all-productive Nescience out of which things are created, the Ignorance which creates and the superconscient impersonal Being into which all grows and ceases.

But in reality we have no proof that man can create anything in this way. What we find is that as he grows, he, not creates, but enters into relation with new ranges of being, new to him, but already pre-existent in the All-Existence. He does not create, but opens up new planes of being in himself. As the closed lotuses, the secret centres of his conscious being open up their knots, he becomes able to conceive them, to receive direct influences from them, to enter into them, to image them in his terrestrial consciousness. What he does create is images, symbol forms, reflective shapes of them in that consciousness. In this sense he creates the Divine within him, creates the gods, creates new planes and worlds within him, and through these images they are able to take possession of the consciousness in the physical world, to pour into it their powers, to transform it with the

light of their higher being. But all this is not a creation of the higher worlds of being, but a revelation of them to the consciousness of the soul on the material plane as it develops out of the Nescience ; it is a creation of their forms here and a reception of their powers, a transforming of its life on this plane by the discovery of its true relation with these higher powers of its own being from which it was separated by the veil of the material Nescience, because it had put them behind it in order that it might concentrate exclusively its Tapas upon its primary work in this physical world of being.

If then these higher worlds have developed subsequently to the creation of the material world, the primary creation, by a farther evolution out of the Inconscient, it must have been done by the All-Soul itself and by a process of which we have no knowledge. And so perhaps we might imagine it, but for one circumstance. It is this, that we find these higher worlds to be in no way based upon the material universe, in no way its results, but rather greater terms of being, larger and freer ranges of consciousness, and all the action of the material plane rather the result of these greater terms, derivatory from them and dependent on them. Immense ranges of powers, influences, phenomena descend upon us from the supramental, the mental, the vital worlds and of these only a part, a selection, as it were, can stage and realise themselves in the order of the physical world, the rest awaiting their time and proper circumstance for revelation in physical term and form, for their play in the terrestrial* evolution.

This discovery defeats all our attempts to give the premier importance to our own plane of being and to our own part in the mundane manifestation. We do not

* Necessarily, by terrestrial we do not mean this one earth and its period of duration, but use earth in the wider root-sense of the Vedantic Prithivi, the earth-principle creating habitations of physical form for the soul.

create God as a myth of our consciousness, but are instruments for his progressive manifestation of the Divine in the material being. We do not create the gods, his powers, but rather such divinity as we manifest is the partial reflection and the shaping here of eternal godheads. We do not create the higher planes, but are intermediaries by which they reveal their light, power, beauty in the form and scope given to them by Nature-force on the material plane. It is the pressure of the life-world which enables life to evolve and develop here in the forms we know and to aspire in us to a greater revelation of itself which will deliver the mortal from his subjection to the narrow limitations of his present physicality. It is the pressure of the mind-world which evolves and develops mind here and in us finds a leverage for self-uplifting and expansion so that we may hope to enlarge continually and even to escape from the prison of our physical mentality. It is the pressure of the supramental and spiritual worlds which is preparing to develop here the manifest power of the spirit and by it open even the being on the physical plane, *ilaiiva*, to the freedom and infinity of the superconscient Divine and liberate from the apparent Inconscience, which was our starting-point, the all-conscient Godhead concealed in us. In this order of things our human consciousness is the instrument, the intermediary, the point in the development of light and power out of the Inconscience at which liberation becomes possible.

We see then that the primary movement must have been a devolution, a gradation downward with the Inconscient for its term of arrival, and that this gradation maintains itself as a series of planes and of worlds of beings and powers which becomes again a means for re-ascent, for an upward gradation. In the descent the Soul carries with it into the inconscience of material Nature all the powers which have created the higher worlds and

are their principle of active being ; therefore once arrived, once the principle of material existence has been posed and organised on the basis of the Nescience, it cannot rest there, but most necessarily develop that which is within it ; whence the principle of evolution, the evolution of life in the material universe, of mind in the material universe, of supermind and spirit in the material universe. And that means the evolution of beings in the physical body who reveal and fulfil these higher principles in the earth-existence,—the graded evolution that we see around us.

This evolution finds its transitional term in man ; for he repeats in the upward course that transition which was made in the downward course in the inverse sense, from the knowledge to the ignorance, from the unity in diversity of Sachchidananda to the egoistic division of the lower mentality, from the manifest Divine to the Divine concealed in the apparent contradiction of his being. Man's transition is to reverse this movement, to develop the knowledge out of the ignorance, realise the unity out of the egoistic diversity, build, manifest, recover the Divine out of the undivine. That is his growth into the divine life, out of his normal humanity into supermanhood.

We have in all the gradations of the cosmic existence to distinguish two divisions, as it were, two hemispheres, the upper and the lower, the worlds of the Knowledge and the worlds of the Ignorance. We may suppose,—a supposition which experience justifies,—a primary plane of consciousness and world in which all beings repose in the unity of the one Being and have their full unity with each other, and that truth of their existence is there the principle of all their experience. Then a secondary divine plane of consciousness and world in which the throwing out of this unity into variety of realisation of its infinite forces of conscious being is the active

principle, and a third in which the delight of being and power turning to creation within the unity is the principle. There follows the fourth plane and world in which the principle of variation on the basis of unity rather than within the unity itself comes forward ; here the principle of diversity comes to an equality, as it were, with that of unity, and yet is consciously dependent upon it so that this is still a world in which the eternal Truth is not lost in forms of self-perversion. But here we get to the verge from which the final lapse becomes possible. That is effected when the conscious-power in action or Tapas concentrates on the diversity and puts the oneness quite behind it so that to the imagination of the being, by the creative Maya of the All-Soul, it becomes rather than is, is the diverse being and no longer the One.

It is here that we pass by the decisive transition to three lower worlds, beginning with the worlds of the Mind. But in all there are ranges, and in the highest ranges Mind still looks back to its true and higher being and recognises it, though it no longer lives securely in it ; in the lower it deepens its exclusive concentration on the becoming, on the diversity and altogether forgets. Below are the worlds of Life in which each being follows its separate will, which now, since it is no longer in its consciousness the will of the All-Soul, has assumed the disguise of Desire ; and since the desire is for separate fulfilment, it is attracted necessarily to the utmost principle of separate diversity. The descent into the nescience of the material universe is the last inevitable stage of this attraction, for on that basis of nescience alone can this contradiction of the real truth of things come to its acme. In this sense it is by desire that the material world is created ; but the desire in the individual merely conceals the will of the All-Soul to fathom the depths of this perverse possibility. And it is again by a desire to recover itself in the forms of the Nescience, the individual desire

masking the Will of the All-Soul to complete its movement,—having posed the terms of the Nescience, to find in them the truth of its own being,—that we are able to rise again out of the depths to the heights.

From this order of the worlds and this purpose of the All-Soul in posing that order, there arise three necessities which man too often in his thought and his religion separates from each other, but which must be taken together if he would understand fully his spiritual, his cosmic and his terrestrial destiny ; the necessity of the reincarnation of the soul, the necessity of the ascent of the soul to worlds beyond, the necessity of the increasing manifestation of the Divine in the human being and on the plane of the terrestrial manifestation.

Essays on the Gita

THE DETERMINISM OF NATURE

When we live in the higher self by this unity of works and knowledge, we become superior to the lower workings of Prakriti, *trigunâfîta*. We are no longer enslaved to Nature and her gunas, but, one with the Ishwara, the master of our nature, we are able to use it without subjection to the chain of Karma for the purposes of the Divine Will in us ; for that is what the greater self in us is, Lord of our works, unaffected by their reactions. The soul ignorant in Nature, on the contrary, is enslaved by that ignorance to her modes, because it is identified there not with its true self, not with the Divine who is seated above her, but with the ego-mind which is a subordinate factor in her workings, a mere mental knot and point of reference for the play of the natural workings. To break this knot, no longer to make the ego the centre and beneficiary of our works, but to derive all from and refer all to the divine Supersoul is to become *trigunatîta*. For it is to live in the supreme consciousness, of which the ego-mind is a degradation, and in the equal and unified Will and Force of which the unequal play of the gunas is a disturbance, an inferior Maya.

The passages in which the Gita lays stress on the subjection of the ego-soul to Nature, have by some been understood as an enunciation of an absolute determinism

of Nature which leaves no room for freedom within the cosmic existence. Certainly, the language it uses is emphatic and seems very absolute. But we must take, here as elsewhere, the thought of the Gita as a whole and not force its truths in their solitary sense quite detached from each other,—as indeed every truth, however true in itself, yet, taken apart from others which at once limit and complete it, becomes a snare to the intellect and a misleading dogma ; for in reality each is a thread of a complex web and no thread must be taken apart from the web. Everything in the Gita is even so interwoven and must be understood in relation to the whole. The Gita itself makes a distinction between those who have not the knowledge of the whole, *akr'itsnavidah*, and are misled by the partial truths of existence, and the Yogin who has the synthetic knowledge of the whole, *kr'itsnavit*. To see all existence steadily and see it whole and not be misled by its conflicting truths, is the first necessity for the calm and complete wisdom to which the Yogin is called upon to rise. A certain absolute freedom is one aspect of the soul's relations with Nature at one pole of our being ; a certain absolute determinism by Nature is the opposite aspect at the opposite pole ; and there is also a partial and apparent, therefore an unreal eidolon of liberty which the soul receives by a contorted reflection of these two opposite truths in the developing mentality. It is the latter to which we ordinarily give, more or less inaccurately, the name of free-will ; but the Gita regards nothing as freedom which is not a complete liberation and mastery.

We have always to keep in mind the two great doctrines which stand behind all the Gita's teachings with regard to the soul and Nature,—the Sankhya truth of the Purusha and Prakriti corrected and completed by the Vedantic truth of the threefold Purusha and the double Prakriti of which the lower form is the Maya of the three *gunas* and the higher is the divine nature and the true

soul nature. This is the key which reconciles and explains what we might have otherwise to leave as contradictions and inconsistencies. There are, in fact, different planes of our conscious existence, and what is practical truth on one plane, ceases to be true, because it assumes a quite different appearance, as soon as we rise to a higher level from which we can see things more in the whole. Recent scientific discovery has shown that man, animal, plant and metal have the same vital reactions and they would, therefore, if each has a certain kind of what for want of a better word we must call nervous consciousness, possess the same basic psychology. Yet if each of these could give its own account of what it experiences, we should have four quite different and largely contradictory statements of the same reactions and the same natural principles, because they get, as we rise in the scale of being, a different meaning and value and are judged by a different outlook. So it is with the levels of the human soul. What we now call in our ordinary mentality our free will, appears to the Yogin who has climbed beyond and to whom our night is day and our day night, not free will at all, but a subjection to the modes of Nature. He regards the same facts, but from the higher outlook of the whole-knower, *kr'itsnavat*, while we view it altogether from the more limited mentality of our partial knowledge, *akr'itsnavidah*, which is an ignorance. What we vaunt of as our freedom, is to him bondage.

This ignorant assumption of freedom, while one is all the time in the meshes of the lower nature, is what the Gita starts from, and it is in contradiction of it that it affirms the complete subjection of the ego-soul on this plane to the gunas. "While the actions are being entirely done by the modes of Nature," it says, "he whose self is bewildered by egoism thinks that it is his 'I' which is doing them. But one who knows the true principles of the divisions of the modes and of works, realises that it

is the modes which are acting and reacting on each other and is not caught in them by attachment. Those who are bewildered by the modes, get attached to the modes and their works ; dull minds, not knowers of the whole, let not the knower of the whole disturb them in their standpoint. Giving up thy works to me, free from desire and egoism, fight delivered from the fever of thy soul." Here there is the clear distinction between two levels of consciousness, two standpoints of action, that of the soul caught in the web of its egoistic nature and doing works with the idea, but not the reality of free will, under the impulsion of Nature, and that of the soul delivered from identification with the ego, observing, sanctioning and governing the works of Nature from above her.

We speak of the soul being subject to Nature ; but on the other hand the Gita in distinguishing the properties of the soul and Nature affirms that while Nature is the executrix, the soul is always the lord, *ishwara*. It speaks here of the self being bewildered by egoism, but the real Self to the Vedantin is the divine, eternally free and self-aware. What then is this self that is bewildered by Nature, this soul that is subject to it ? The answer is that we are speaking here in the common parlance of our lower or mental view of things ; we are speaking of the apparent self, of the apparent soul, not of the real self, not of the true Purusha. It is really the ego which is subject to Nature, inevitably, because it is itself part of Nature, one functioning of its machinery ; but when the self-awareness in the mind-consciousness identifies itself with the ego, it creates the appearance of a lower self, an ego-self. And so too what we think of ordinarily as the soul, is really the natural personality, not the true Person, the Purusha, but the desire-soul in us which is a reflection of the consciousness of the Purusha in the workings of Prakriti : it is, in fact, itself only an action of the three modes and therefore a part of Nature. Thus there are,

we may say, two souls in us, the apparent or desire-soul, which changes with the mutations of the gunas and is entirely constituted and determined by them, and the free and eternal Purusha not limited by Nature and her gunas. We have two selves, the apparent self, which is only the ego, that mental centre in us which takes up this mutable action of Prakriti, this mutable personality, and which says "I am this personality, I am this natural being who am doing these works,"—but the natural being is simply Nature, a composite of the gunas,—and the true self which is, indeed, the upholder, the possessor and the lord of Nature and figured in her, but is not itself the mutable natural personality. The way to be free must then be to get rid of the desires of this desire-soul and the false self-view of this ego. "Having become free from desire and egoism," cries the Teacher, "fight with all the fever of thy soul passed away from thee,"—*nirāśhrīr nirmamo bhutvā*.

This view of our being starts from the Sankhya analysis of the dual principle in our nature, Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is inactive, *akartā*; Prakriti is active, *kartrī*: Purusha is the being full of the light of consciousness; Prakriti is the Nature, mechanical, reflecting all its works in the conscious, witnessing Purusha. Prakriti works by the inequality of its three modes, gunas, in perpetual collision and intermixture and mutation with each other; and by its function of ego-mind it gets the Purusha to identify itself with all this working and so creates the sense of active, mutable, temporal personality in the silent eternity of the Self. The impure natural consciousness overclouds the pure soul-consciousness; the mind forgets the Person in the ego and the personality; we suffer the discriminating intelligence to be carried away by the sense-mind and its outgoing functions and by the desire of the life and the body. So long as the Purusha sanctions this action, ego and desire and ignorance must

govern the natural being.

But if this were all, then the only remedy would be to withdraw the sanction, suffer or compel all our nature by this withdrawal to fall into a motionless equilibrium of the three gunas and so cease from all action. But this is precisely the remedy,—though it is undoubtedly a remedy, one which abolishes, we might say, the patient along with the disease,—which the Gita constantly discourages. Especially, to resort to a tamasic inaction is just what the ignorant will do if this truth is thrust upon them ; the discriminating mind in them will fall into a false division, a false opposition, *buddhibhedam*; their active nature and their intelligence will be divided against each other and produce a disturbance and confusion without true issue, a false and self-deceiving line of action, *mithyâchâra*, or else a mere tamasic inertia, cessation of works, diminution of the will to life and action, not therefore a liberation, but rather a subjection to the lowest of the three gunas, to *tamas*, the principle of ignorance and of inertia. Or else they will not be able to understand at all, they will find fault with this higher teaching, assert against it their present mental experience, their ignorant idea of free will and, yet more confirmed by the plausibility of their logic in their bewilderment and the deception of ego and desire, lose their chance of liberation in a deeper, more obstinate confirmation of the ignorance.

In fact, these higher truths can only be helpful, because they are only true to experience and can only be lived on a higher and vaster plane of consciousness and being. To view these truths from below is to mis-see, misunderstand and probably to misuse them. It is a higher truth that the distinction of good and evil is a practical fact and law valid for the egoistic human life which is the stage of transition from the animal to the divine, but on a higher plane we rise beyond good and evil, are above their duality even as the Godhead is above it. But

the unripe mind seizing on this truth without rising from the lower consciousness where it is not practically valid, will simply make it a convenient excuse for indulging its Asuric propensities, denying the distinction between good and evil altogether and falling by self-indulgence deeper into the morass of perdition, *sarvâ-juâna-vimûdhan nash-tân achetashah*. So too with this truth of the determinism of Nature ; it will be mis-seen and misused, as those misuse it who declare that a man is what his nature has made him and cannot do otherwise than as his nature compels him. It is true in a sense, but not in the sense which is attached to-it, not in the sense that the ego-self can claim irresponsibility and impunity for itself in its works ; for it has will and it has desire and so long as it acts according to its will and desire, even though that be its nature, it must bear the reactions of its Karma. It is in a net, if you will, a snare which may well seem perplexing, illogical, unjust, terrible to its present experience, to its limited self-knowledge, but a snare of its own choice, a net of its own weaving.

The Gita says, indeed, "All existences follow their nature and what shall coercing it avail?" which seems, if we take it by itself, a hopelessly absolute assertion of the omnipotence of Nature over the soul ; "even the man of knowledge acts according to his own nature." And on this it founds the injunction to follow in action the law of the nature, "Better is one's own law of works, *swâdharma*, though in itself faulty, if it is well wrought out, than an alien law ; death in one's own law of being is better, perilous is it to follow an alien law." What is precisely meant by this *swâdharma* we have to wait to see until we get to the more elaborate disquisition in the closing chapters about Purusha and Prakriti and the gunas ; but certainly it does not mean that we are to follow any impulse, even though evil, which what we call our nature dictates to us. For between these two verses

the Gita throws in this further injunction, "In the object of this or that sense liking and disliking are set in ambush; fall not into their power, for they are the besetters of the soul in its path." And immediately after this in answer to Arjuna's objection who asks him, if there is no fault in following our Nature, what are we then to say of that in us which drives a man to sin, as if by force, even against his own struggling will, the Teacher answers that this is desire and its companion wrath, children of rajas, the second guna, the principle of passion, and this desire is the soul's great enemy and has to be slain. Abstinence from evil-doing it declares to be the first condition for liberation, and always it enjoins self-mastery, self-control, *sanyama*, control of the mind, senses, all the lower being.

There is therefore a distinction to be made between what is essential in the nature, its native and inevitable action, which it avails not to all to repress, suppress, coerce, and what is accidental to it, its wanderings, confusions, perversions, over which we must certainly get control. There is a distinction implied too between coercion and suppression, *nigraha*, and control with right use and guidance, *sanyama*. The former is a violence done to the nature by the will, which in the end depresses the natural powers of the being, *âtmanam avasâdayet*; the latter is the control of the lower by the higher self, which successfully gives to those powers their right action and maximum efficiency,—*yogah karmasu kauçalam*. This nature of *sanyama* is made very clear by the Gita in the opening of its sixth chapter, "By the self thou shouldst deliver the self, thou shouldst not depress and cast down the self (whether by self-indulgence or suppression); for the self is the friend of the self and the self is the enemy. To the man is his self a friend in whom the (lower) self has been conquered by the (higher) self, but to him who is not in possession of his (higher) self, the (lower) self is as if an enemy and acts as an enemy."

When one has conquered one's self and attained to calm (of perfect self-mastery and self-possession), then is the supreme self in a man founded and poised in this conscious being, *samâhita*. In other words, to master the lower self by the higher, the natural self by the spiritual is the way of man's perfection and liberation.

Here then is a very great qualification of the determinism of Nature, a precise limitation of its meaning and scope. How the passage from subjection to mastery works out, is best seen if we observe the working of the *gunas* in the scale of Nature from the bottom to the top. At the bottom are the existences in which the principle of *tamas* is supreme, the beings who have not yet attained to the light of self-consciousness and are utterly driven by the current of Nature. There is a will even in the atom, but we see clearly enough that it is not free-will, because it is mechanical and the atom does not possess the will, but is possessed by it. Here the *buddhi*, the element of intelligence and will in *Prakriti*, is actually and plainly what the *Sankhya* asserts it to be, *jada*, a mechanical, even an inconscient principle in which the light of the conscious Soul has not struggled to the surface; the atom is not conscious of an intelligent will; *tamas*, the inert and ignorant principle, has hold of it, conceals *rajas* and *sattwa* within it and holds a high holiday of mastery, forcing this form of existence to act with a stupendous force indeed, but as a mechanical instrument, *yantrârûdham mâyayâ*. Next, in the plant the principle of *rajas* has struggled to the surface, with its power of life, with its capacity of pleasure and suffering, but *sattwa* is quite involved, has not yet emerged to awaken the light of a conscious intelligent will; all is still mechanical, *tamas* stronger than *rajas*, both gaolers of the imprisoned *sattwa*.

In the animal, though *tamas* is still strong, though we may still describe him as belonging to the tamasic

creation, *tāmasa sarga*, still rajas prevails much more against tamas, brings with it its developed power of life, desire, emotion, passion, pleasure, suffering, while sattwa, emerging, but still dependent on the lower action, contributes to these the first light of the conscious mind, the mechanical sense of ego, conscious memory, a certain kind of thought, especially the wonders of instinct and animal intuition. But as yet the buddhi, the intelligent will, has not developed the full light of consciousness ; therefore no responsibility can be attributed to the animal for its actions. The tiger can be no more blamed for killing and devouring than the atom for its blind movements, the fire for burning and consuming or the storm for its destructions. If it could answer the question, the tiger would indeed say, like man, that it had free-will, it would have the egoism of the doer, it would say, " I kill, I devour ; " but we can see clearly enough that it is not really the tiger, but Nature in the tiger which kills, Nature in the tiger which devours ; if it refrains from killing or devouring, it is from satiety, from fear or from indolence, from another principle of Nature in it, from the action of the guna called tamas. As it was Nature in the animal that killed, so it is Nature in the animal that refrained from killing. Whatever soul is in it, sanctions passively the action of Nature, is as much passive in its passion and activity as in its indolence or inaction. The animal like the atom acts according to the mechanism of its nature, and not otherwise, *sadriṣam cheshtate swasyāḥ prakṛ'iteḥ*, as if mounted on a machine, *yantrârûdho mâyayâ*.

Well, but in man at least there is another action, a free soul, a free will, a sense of responsibility, a real doer other than Nature, other than mechanism of Maya ? So it seems, because in man there is a conscious intelligent will ; *buddhi* is full of the light of the observing Purusha, who through it, it seems, observes, understands, approves, or disapproves, gives or withholds the sanction, seems

indeed at last to begin to be the lord of his nature. Man is not like the tiger or the fire or the storm ; he cannot kill and say as sufficient justification, "I am acting according to my nature," and he cannot do it, because he has not the nature and not therefore the law of action, *svadharma*, of the tiger, storm or fire. He has a conscious intelligent will, a *buddhi*, and to that he must refer his actions. If he does not do so, if he acts blindly according to his impulses and passions, then his *svadharma* is not rightly worked out, *su-anusthitam*, he has not acted according to the full measure of his humanity, but even as might the animal. It is true that the principle of *rajas* or the principle of *tamas* gets hold of his *buddhi* and induces it to justify any and every action he commits or any avoidance of action ; but still the justification or at least the reference to the *buddhi* must be there either before or after the action is committed. And besides in man *sattva* is awake and acts not only as intelligence and intelligent will, but in a seeking for light, for right knowledge and right action according to the knowledge, in a perception of the existence and claims of others, in an attempt to know the higher law of his nature, which the *sattvic* principle in him creates, and to obey it, in a conception of the greater peace and happiness which virtue, knowledge and sympathy bring in their train. He knows more or less imperfectly that he has to govern his *rajasic* and *tamasic* by his *sattvic* nature and that thither tends the perfection of his normal humanity.

But is the condition of the predominantly *sattvic* nature freedom and is this will in man a free will ? That the Gita from the standpoint of a higher consciousness in which alone is true freedom, denies. The *buddhi* or conscious intelligent will is still an instrument of Nature and when it acts, even in the *sattvic* sense, it is still Nature which acts and the soul which is carried on the wheel by *Maya*. At any rate, at least nine-tenths of our

freedom of will is a palpable fiction ; that will is created and determined not by its own self-existent action at a given moment, but by our past, our heredity, our training, our environment, the whole tremendous complex thing we call Karma, which is simply the whole past action of Nature in us and the world converging in the individual, determining what he is, determining what his will shall be at a given moment and determining, as far as analysis can see, even its action at that moment. The ego associates itself always with its Karma and says " I did " and " I will " and " I suffer," but if it looks at itself and sees how it was made, it is obliged to say of man as of the animal, "Nature did this in me, Nature wills in me," and if it qualifies by saying "my Nature," that only means "Nature as self-determined in this individual creature." It was the strong perception of this aspect of existence which compelled the Buddhists to declare that all was Karma and that there is no self in existence, that the idea of self is only a delusion of the ego-mind. When the ego thinks "I choose and will this virtuous and not that evil action," it is simply associating itself, like the fly on the wheel, with a predominant wave or a formed current of the sattwic principle by which Nature chooses through the buddhi one type of action in preference to another. Nature forms itself in us and wills in us, the Sankhya would say, for the pleasure of the inactive observing Purusha.

But even if this extreme statement has to be qualified, and we shall see hereafter in what sense, still the freedom of our individual will, if we choose to give it that name, is very relative and almost infinitesimal, so much is it mixed up with other determining elements. Its strongest power does not amount to mastery. It cannot be relied upon to resist the strong wave of circumstance or of other Nature which either overbears or modifies or mixes up with it or at the best subtly deceives and

circumvents it. Even the most sattwic will is so overborne or mixed up with or circumvented by the rajasic and tamasic gunas as to be only in part sattwic, and thence arises that sufficiently strong element of self-deception, of a quite involuntary and even innocent make-believe and hiding from oneself which the merciless eye of the psychologist detects in the best human action. When we think we are acting quite freely, powers are concealed behind our action which escape even a careful self-introspection ; when we think that we are free from ego, the ego is there concealed, in the mind of the saint as in that of the sinner. When our eyes are really opened on our action and its springs, we are obliged to say with the Gita "*guna gñeshu vartante*," "it was the modes of Nature that were acting upon the modes."

For this reason even a high predominance of the sattwic principle does not constitute freedom. For, as the Gita points out, the sattwa binds, as much as the other gunas, and binds just in the same way, by desire, by ego ; a nobler desire, a purer ego,—but so long as in any form these two hold the being, there is no freedom. The man of virtue, of knowledge, has his ego of the virtuous man, his ego of knowledge, and it is that sattwic ego which he seeks to satisfy ; for his own sake he seeks virtue and knowledge. Only when we cease to satisfy the ego, to think and will from the ego, the "I" in us, is there real freedom. In other words, freedom, highest self-mastery begin when above the natural self we see the supreme Self of which the ego is an obstructing veil and a blinding shadow. And that can only be when we see the one Self in all seated above Nature and make our individual being one with it in being and consciousness and in its individual nature of action only an instrument of a supreme Will, the one Will that is really free. For that we must rise above the three gunas, become trigunatita ; for that Self is beyond even the sattwic principle. We have to

climb to it through the sattwa, but attain to it only when we get beyond sattwa ; we reach out to it from the ego, but only reach it by leaving the ego. We are drawn towards it by the highest, most passionate, most stupendous and ecstatic of all desires ; but we can securely live in it only when all desire drops away from us. We have to liberate ourselves even from the desire of our liberation.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XLI

LOVE AND THE TRIPLE PATH

Will, knowledge and love are the three divine powers in human nature and the life of man, and they point to the three paths by which the human soul rises to the divine. The integrality of them, the union of man with God in all the three, must therefore, as we have seen, be the foundation of an integral Yoga.

Action is the first power of life. Nature begins with force and its works which, once conscious in man, become will and its achievements ; therefore it is that by turning his action Godwards the life of man best and most surely begins to become divine. It is the door of first access, the starting-point of the initiation. When the will in him is made one with the divine will and the whole action of the being proceeds from the Divine and is directed towards the Divine, the union in works is perfectly accomplished. But works fulfil themselves in knowledge ; all the totality of works, says the Gita, finds its rounded culmination in knowledge, *sarvam karmâ-khīlam jñāne parisamâpyate*. By union in will and works we become one in the omnipresent conscious being from whom all our will and works have their rise and draw their power and in whom they fulfil the round of their energies. And the crown of this union is love ; for love

is the delight of conscious union with the Being in whom we live, act and move, by whom we exist, for whom alone we learn in the end to act and to be. That is the trinity of our powers, the union of all three in God to which we arrive when we start from works as our way of access and our line of contact.

Knowledge is the foundation of a constant living in the Divine. For consciousness is the foundation of all living and being, and knowledge is the action of the consciousness, the light by which it knows itself and its realities, the power by which, starting from action, we are able to hold the inner results of thought and act in a firm growth of our conscious being until it accomplishes itself, by union, in the infinity of the divine being. The Divine meets us in many aspects and to each of them knowledge is the key, so that by knowledge we enter into and possess the infinite and divine in every way of his being, *sarvabhâvena*,* and receive him into us and are possessed by him in every way of ours.

Without knowledge we live blindly in him with the blindness of the power of Nature intent on its works, but forgetful of its source and possessor, undivinely therefore, deprived of the real, the full delight of our being. By knowledge arriving at conscious oneness with that which we know,—for by identity alone can complete and real knowledge exist,—the division is healed and the cause of all our limitation and discord and weakness and discontent is abolished. But knowledge is not complete without works ; for the Will in being also is God and not the being or its self-aware silent existence alone, and if works find their culmination in knowledge, knowledge also finds its fulfilment in works. And, here too, love is the crown of knowledge ; for love is the delight of union, and unity must be conscious of joy of union to find all the

riches of its own delight. Perfect knowledge indeed leads to perfect love, integral knowledge to a rounded and multitudinous richness of love. "He who knows me" says the Gita "as the supreme Purusha"—not only as the immutable oneness, but in the many-souled movement of the divine and as that, superior to both, in which both are divinely held,—"he, because he has the integral knowledge, seeks me by love in every way of his being." This is the trinity of our powers, the union of all three in God to which we arrive when we start from knowledge.

Love is the crown of all being and its way of fulfilment, that by which it rises to all intensity and all fullness and the ecstasy of utter self-finding. For if the Being is in its very nature consciousness and by consciousness we become one with it, therefore by perfect knowledge of it fulfilled in identity, yet is delight the nature of consciousness and of the acme of delight love is the key and the secret. And if will is the power of conscious being by which it fulfils itself and by union in will we become one with the Being in its characteristic infinite power, yet all the works of that power start from delight, live in the delight, have delight for their aim and end; love of the Being in itself and in all of itself that its power of consciousness manifests, is the way to the perfect wideness of the Ananda. Love is the power and passion of the divine self-delight and without love we may get the rapt peace of its infinity, the absorbed silence of the Ananda, but not its absolute depth of richness and fullness. Love leads us from the suffering of division into the bliss of perfect union, but without losing that joy of the act of union which is the soul's greatest discovery and for which the life of the cosmos is a long preparation. Therefore to approach God by love is to prepare oneself for the greatest possible spiritual fulfilment.

Love fulfilled does not exclude knowledge, but itself brings knowledge ; and the completer the knowledge, the richer the possibility of love. "By Bhakti" says the Lord in the Gita "shall a man know Me in all my extent and greatness and as I am in the principles of my being, and when he has known Me in the principles of my being, then he enters into Me." Love without knowledge is a passionate and intense, but blind, crude, often dangerous thing, a great power, but also a stumbling-block ; love, limited in knowledge, condemns itself in its fervour and often by its very fervour to narrowness ; but love leading to perfect knowledge brings the infinite and absolute union. Such love is not inconsistent with, but rather throws itself with joy into divine works ; for it loves God and is one with him in all his being, and therefore in all beings, and to work for the world is then to feel and fulfil multitudinously one's love for God. This is the trinity of our powers, the union of all three in God to which we arrive when we start on our journey by the path of devotion with Love for the Angel of the Way to find in the ecstasy of the divine delight of the All-Lover's being the fulfilment of ours, its secure home and blissful abiding-place and the centre of its universal radiation.

Since then in the union of these three powers lies our base of perfection, the seeker of an integral self-fulfilment in the Divine must avoid or throw away, if he has them at all, the misunderstanding and mutual depreciation which we often find existent between the followers of the three paths. Those who have the cult of knowledge seem often, if not to despise, yet to look downward from their dizzy eminence on the path of the devotee as if it were a thing inferior, ignorant, good only for souls that are not yet ready for the heights of the Truth. It is true that devotion without knowledge is often a thing raw, crude, blind and dangerous, as the errors, crimes, follies of the religious have too often shown. But this is

because devotion in them has not found its own path, its own real principle, has not therefore really entered on the path, but is fumbling and feeling after it, is on one of the bypaths that lead to it; and knowledge too at this stage is as imperfect as devotion, dogmatic, schismatic, intolerant, bound up in the narrowness of some single and exclusive principle, even that being usually very imperfectly seized. When the devotee has grasped the power that shall raise him, has really laid hold on love, that in the end purifies and enlarges him as effectively as knowledge can; they are equal powers, though their methods of arriving at the same goal are different. The pride of the philosopher looking down on the passion of the devotee arises, as does all pride, from a certain deficiency of his nature; for the intellect too exclusively developed misses what the heart has to offer. The intellect is not in every way superior to the heart; if it opens more readily doors at which the heart is apt to fumble in vain, it is, itself, apt to miss truths which to the heart are very near and easy to hold. And if when the way of thought deepens into spiritual experience, it arrives readily at the etherial heights, pinnacles, skiey widenesses, it cannot without the aid of the heart fathom the intense and rich abysses and oceanic depths of the divine being and the divine Ananda.

The way of Bhakti is supposed often to be necessarily inferior because it proceeds by worship which belongs to that stage of spiritual experience where there is a difference, an insufficient unity between the human soul and the Divine, because its very principle is love and love means always two, the lover and the beloved, a dualism therefore, while oneness is the highest spiritual experience, and because it seeks after the personal God while the Impersonal is the highest and the eternal truth, if not even the sole Reality. But worship is only the first step on the path of devotion. Where external worship

changes into the inner adoration, real Bhakti begins ; that deepens into the intensity of divine love ; that love leads to the joy of closeness in our relations with the Divine ; the joy of closeness passes into the bliss of union. Love too as well as knowledge brings us to a highest oneness and it gives to that oneness its greatest possible depth and intensity. It is true that love returns gladly upon a difference in oneness, by which the oneness itself becomes richer and sweeter. But here we may say that the heart is wiser than the thought, at least than that thought which fixes upon opposite ideas of the Divine and concentrates on one to the exclusion of the other which seems its contrary ; but is really its complement and a means of its greatest fulfilment. This is the weakness of the mind that it limits itself by its thoughts, its positive and negative ideas, the aspects of the Divine Reality that it sees, and tends too much to pit one against the other.

Thought in the mind, *vichâra*, the philosophic trend by which mental knowledge approaches the Divine, is apt to lend a greater importance to the abstract over the concrete, to that which is high and remote over that which is intimate and near. It finds a greater truth in the delight of the One in itself, a lesser truth or even a falsehood in the delight of the One in the Many and of the Many in the One, a greater truth in the impersonal and the Nirguna, a lesser truth or a falsehood in the personal and the Saguna. But the Divine is beyond our oppositions of ideas, beyond the logical contradictions we make between his aspects. He is not, we have seen, bound and restricted by exclusive unity ; his oneness realises itself in infinite variation and to the joy of that love has the completest key, without therefore missing the joy of the unity. The highest knowledge and highest spiritual experience by knowledge find his oneness as perfect in his various relations with the Many as in his self-absorbed delight. If to thought the Impersonal seems the wider and

higher truth, the Personal a narrower experience, the spirit finds both of them to be aspects of a Reality which figures itself in both, and if there is a knowledge of that Reality to which thought arrives by insistence on the infinite Impersonality, there is also a knowledge of it to which love arrives by insistence on the infinite Personality. The spiritual experience of each leads, if followed to the end, to the same ultimate Truth. By Bhakti as by knowledge, as the Gita tells us, we arrive at unity with the Purushotama, the Supreme who contains in himself the impersonal and numberless personalities, the qualitless and infinite qualities, pure being, consciousness and delight and the endless play of their relations.

The devotee on the other hand tends to look down on the sawdust dryness of mere knowledge. And it is true that philosophy by itself without the rapture of spiritual experience is something as dry as it is clear and cannot give all the satisfaction we seek, that its spiritual experience even, when it has not left its supports of thought and shot up beyond the mind, lives too much in an abstract delight and that what it reaches, is not indeed the void it seems to the passion of the heart, but still has the limitations of the peaks. On the other hand, love itself is not complete without knowledge. The Gita distinguishes between three initial kinds of Bhakti, that which seeks refuge in the Divine from the sorrows of the world, *ârta*, that which, desiring, approaches the Divine as the giver of its good, *arthârthî*, and that which attracted by what it already loves, but does not yet know, yearns to know this divine Unknown, *jijñâsu* ; but it gives the palm to the Bhakti that knows. Evidently the intensity of passion which says, " I do not understand, I love," and, loving, cares not to understand, is not love's last self-expression, but its first, nor is it its highest intensity. Rather as knowledge of the Divine grows, delight in the Divine and love of it must increase. Nor can mere rapture be secure

without the foundation of knowledge ; to live in what we love, gives that security, and to live in it means to be one with it in consciousness, and oneness of consciousness is the perfect condition of knowledge. Knowledge of the Divine gives to love of the Divine its firmest security, opens to it its own widest joy of experience, raises it to its highest pinnacles of outlook.

If the mutual misunderstandings of these two powers are an ignorance, no less so is the tendency of both to look down on the way of works as inferior to their own loftier pitch of spiritual achievement. There is an intensity of love, as there is an intensity of knowledge, to which works seem something outward and distracting. But works are only thus outward and distracting when we have not found oneness of will and consciousness with the Supreme. When once that is found, works become the very power of knowledge and the very outpouring of love. If knowledge is the very state of oneness and love its bliss, divine works are the living power of its light and sweetness. There is a movement of love, as in the aspiration of human love, to separate the lover and the loved in the enjoyment of their exclusive oneness away from the world and from all others, shut up in the nuptial chambers of the heart. That is perhaps an inevitable movement of this path. But still the widest love fulfilled in knowledge sees the world not as something other and hostile to this joy, but as the being of the Beloved and all creatures as his being, and in that vision divine works find their joy and their justification.

This is the knowledge in which an integral Yoga must live. We have to start Godward from the powers of the mind, the intellect, the will, the heart, and in the mind all is limited. Limitations, exclusiveness there can hardly fail to be at the beginning and for a long time on the way. But an integral Yoga will wear these more loosely than more exclusive ways of seeking, and it will

sooner emerge from the mental necessity. It may commence with the way of love, as with the way of knowledge or of works ; but where they meet, is the beginning of its joy of fulfilment. Love it cannot miss, even if it does not start from it ; for love is the crown of works and the flowering of knowledge.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

III

THE CONQUEST OF SELF

THE MASTERY OF THE SENSES

- 1 In the man who contemplates the objects of the senses, attachment to them is born, from attachment is born desire, and from desire is born the wrath of desire ; from that wrath delusion and from delusion error of the memory in the reason ; from the error loss of understanding, and by the loss of understanding he goes to perdition.
 - 2 Human souls which have not the intelligence for their guide, are even as animals without reason. Intelligence abandons them to the passions which draw them by the lure of desire ; their wraths and their appetites are equally blind and push them towards evil without ever finding satiety.
 - 3 Who is blinder even than the blind ? The man of passion.
-

- 4 When the soul has not self-mastery, one looks
 5 and sees not, listens and hears not.—Is one, indeed,
 master of himself when he follows his own caprices?
 6-7 The evildoer is the only slave.—The ignorant
 is the slave of his passions, the wise man is their
 master.
- 8 It is by resisting the passions, not by yielding
 to them that one finds true peace in the heart.—
 9 By the taming of the senses the intelligence grows.
 10 —Not to tame the senses is to take the road of
 misery, to conquer them is to enter into the path
 of well-being. Let each choose of these two roads
 the one that pleases him.
- 11 Happy the man who has tamed the senses and
 is utterly their master.
- 12 A man who has command over his senses and
 the forces of his being, has a just title to the name
 13 of king.—The radiant beings themselves envy him
 whose senses are mastered like horses well trained
 14 by their driver.—He whose senses have become
 calm like horses perfectly tamed by a driver, who
 has rid himself of pride and concupiscence, the
 gods themselves envy his lot.
- 15 Thus become wise, calm, submitted, passionless,
 enduring, master of himself, he sees the Self in him-
 self and in all beings. Sin conquers him no more,
 he conquers sin; sin consumes him no more, he
 consumes sin.

*
* *

- 16 Repress then your senses; calm, minds appeased,

4) Theng-tse.—5) Farid-ud-din-attar.—6) Rousseau.—7) Sutra in 42 articles.—8) Imitation of Christ.—9) Mahabharata.—10) Hitopadesha.—11) Buddhist Maxims.—12) Angelus Silesius.—13) Udanavarga.—14) Dhammapada.—15) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.—16) Lalita Vistara.

The Psychology of Social Development

XXI

A society founded upon spirituality will differ in two essential points from the normal human society which begins from and ends with his lower nature. The normal human society starts from diversity and antagonism of interests, from the clash of egos, from the conflict of ideas, tendencies and principles ; it tries first to patch up an accommodation of interests, a treaty of peace between our discords, founded on a series of contracts, and to these contracts it gives the name of social law. By developing, as against the interests which lead to conflict, the interests which call for association and mutual assistance, it creates sympathies and habits of helpfulness which give a psychological support and sanction to its mechanism of law and contract. It justifies the mass of social institutions and customs which it thus creates by the greater satisfaction and efficiency of the physical, the vital and the mental life of man which it can show for its result and whole upshot, in a word, by the growth and advantages of civilisation. A good many losses have indeed to be written off as against these gains, but those are to be accepted as the price we must pay for civilisation.

The normal society treats man essentially as a physical, vital and mental being. For the life, the mind, the body are the three terms of existence with which it has some competence to deal. It develops a system of mental growth and efficiency, an intellectual, aesthetic and moral culture. It evolves the vital side of human life and creates an ever-growing system of economical efficiency and vital enjoyment, which becomes more and more rich, cumbrous and complex as civilisation develops. Depressing by its mental and vital overgrowth the natural vigour of the physical and animal man, it tries to set the balance right by systems of physical culture, a cumbrous science of habits and remedies to cure the ills it has created and as much amelioration as it can manage of the artificial forms of living which are necessary to its social system. In the end, however, experience shows that society tends to die by its own development, a sure sign that there is some radical defect in its system, that its idea of man and its method of development do not correspond to the reality of the human being and to the aim of life which that reality imposes.

Its development of life leads to an exhaustion of its vitality and a refusal of Nature to lend her support any farther to a continued advance upon these lines; its mentality, after disturbing the balance of the human system to its own greater profit, finally discovers that it has exhausted and destroyed that which fed it and loses its power of healthy action and productiveness. It is found that civilisation has created many more problems than it can solve, has multiplied needs the satisfaction of which it has not sufficient vital force to sustain, has developed a jungle of claims and artificial instincts in the midst of which life loses its way and has no longer any sight of its aim. The more advanced minds begin to declare civilisation a failure and society begins to feel that they are right. But the remedy proposed is either a halt and even a

retrogression, which means in the end more confusion, stagnation and decay, or a reversion to "Nature" which is impossible without a cataclysm and disintegration of society ; or even a cure is aimed at by carrying artificial remedies to their acme, say by Science and the scientific organisation of life, which means that the engine shall replace life, the arbitrary logical reason substitute itself for complex Nature and man be saved by machinery.

It may be suggested that the radical defect of all our systems is their deficient development of just that in man which society has most neglected, the spiritual element, the soul which is the true being. Even to have a healthy body, a strong vitality and an active and clarified mind and a field for their action and enjoyment, carries man no more than a certain distance ; afterwards he flags and tires for want of a real self-finding, a satisfying aim for his action and progress. These three things do not make the sum of a complete manhood ; they are means to an ulterior end and cannot be made for ever an aim in themselves. Add a rich emotional life governed by a well-ordered ethical standard, and still there is the savour of something left out, some supreme good which these things mean, but do not in themselves arrive at, do not discover till they go beyond themselves. Add a religious system and a widespread spirit of belief and piety, and still you have not found the means of social salvation. All these things human society has developed, but none of them has saved it from disillusionment, weariness and decay. The ancient intellectual cultures of Europe ended in disruptive doubt and sceptical impotence, the pieties of Asia in stagnation and decline. Modern society has discovered a new principle of survival, progress, but the aim of that progress it has never discovered, unless it is more knowledge, more equipment, more enjoyment, a greater and still greater complexity of the social economy. But these things must lead in the end where the old led, for they

are only the same thing on a larger scale ; they lead in a circle, that is to say, nowhere ; they do not escape from the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death, they do not really find the secret of self-prolongation by constant self-renewal which is the principle of immortality, but only seem for a moment to find it by the illusion of a series of experiments each of which ends in disappointment. That so far has been the nature of modern progress. Only in its new turn inwards, towards a greater subjectivity, now only beginning, is there a better hope ; for by that turning it may discover that the real truth of man is to be found in his soul.

It will be said that this is an old discovery and that it governed the old societies under the name of religion. But this is only an appearance. The discovery was there, but it was made for the life of the individual only, and even for him it looked beyond the earth for its fulfilment, and at earth only as a place of the individual's preparation for a solitary salvation. Human society itself never seized on the discovery of the soul as the law of its own being or the means of terrestrial perfection. If we look at the old religions in their social as apart from their individual aspect, we see that the use society made of them was only of their most unspiritual or at any rate of their less spiritual parts. It made use of them to give an august, awful and would-be eternal sanction to its mass of customs and institutions ; it made of them a veil of mystery against human questioning and a shield of darkness against the innovator. So far as it saw in religion a means of human salvation and perfection, it laid hands upon it at once to mechanise it and to catch the soul of man and bind it on the wheels of this socio-religious machinery. It saddled upon religion a Church, a priesthood and a mass of ceremonies and set over it a pack of watchdogs under the name of creeds and dogmas, dogmas which one had to accept and obey under pain of condemnation

to eternal hell by an eternal judge beyond, just as one had to accept and to obey the laws of society on pain of condemnation to temporal imprisonment or death by a mortal judge below. This false socialisation of religion has been always the chief cause of its failure to regenerate mankind.

For nothing can be more fatal to religion than for its spiritual element to be crushed or formalised out of existence by its outward aids and forms and machinery. The falsehood of the old social use of religion is shown by its effects. History has shown more than once the coincidence of the greatest religious fervour and piety with darkest ignorance, the squalor and long vegetation of the mass of human life, the unquestioned reign of cruelty, injustice and oppression, the end of all this being usually attended by a widespread revolt against the established religion. It is another sign when the too scrupulously exact observation of a socio-religious system and its rites and forms, which by that very fact begin to lose their sense and true religious value, becomes the law of religion rather than the spiritual growth of the individual and the race. And a great sign of this failure of society is when the individual is obliged to flee from society in order to find room for his spiritual growth; when, finding human life given over to the unregenerated mind, life and body or the place of spiritual freedom occupied by the bonds of form and church and Shastra, he is obliged to break away from all these to seek for growth into the spirit in the monastery, on the mountain-top, in the cavern, the desert and the forest. When there is that division between life and the spirit, sentence of condemnation is passed upon human life. Either it is left to circle in its false routine or it is even decried as worthless, loses that self-confidence in itself and its aims, that *sraddha*, without which it cannot come to anything and sinks towards darkness and the dust. There may be a glorious

crop of saints and ascetics in that forcing soil, but the race, the society, the nation move towards littleness, weakness and stagnation. Or it has to turn to the intellect for rescue and arrive by an age of rationalism at a fresh effort towards the restatement of spiritual truth and a new attempt to spiritualise society.

The spiritual aim in society will regard man not as a mind, a life and a body, but as a soul seeking for divine fulfilment upon earth, and not only in heavens beyond, which after all it need not have left if it had no divine business here in the world of physical, vital and mental nature. It will therefore regard the life, mind and body, neither as ends in themselves, sufficient for their own satisfaction, nor as mortal members full of disease which have only to be dropped off for the rescued spirit to flee away into its own pure regions, but as first instruments of the soul. It will believe in their destiny and help them to believe in themselves, but for that very reason in their highest and not only in their lowest or lower possibilities. Their destiny will be, in its view, to spiritualise themselves so as to grow into visible members of the spirit, lucid means of its manifestation, themselves spiritual. For as it will accept the truth of man's soul as a thing entirely divine in its essence, so it will accept the possibility of his whole being becoming divine in spite of its first contradictions in Nature and even with these as a necessary earthly starting-point. And as it will regard man the individual, so it will regard man the collectivity, a collective soul seeking upon earth divine fulfilment in its manifold relations. Therefore all the different parts of man's life which correspond to the parts of his being, physical, vital, dynamic, emotional, aesthetic, ethical, intellectual, it will hold sacred and see in them instruments for a growth towards a diviner living. And every human society, nation, people or other organic aggregate it will regard from the same standpoint, subsouls, as it were, means of a complex

manifestation and self-fulfilment of the Spirit, the divine Reality, in man upon earth. The possible godhead of man because he is inwardly of one being with God, will be its one solitary creed and dogma.

But even this it will not seek to enforce by an external compulsion upon the lower members of man's being, for that is *nigraha*, a repressive contradiction of the nature which may lead to an apparent suppression of the evil, but not to a real and healthy growth of the good ; it will rather hold it up as a light and inspiration to them to grow into the godhead from within themselves. Neither in the individual nor in the society will it seek to imprison, wall in, repress, impoverish, but to let in the widest air and the highest light. A large freedom will be the law of a spiritual society and the increase of freedom a sign of the growth of human society towards the possibility of true spiritualisation. To spiritualise in this sense a society of slaves, slaves of power, slaves of authority, slaves of custom, slaves of dogma, slaves of all sorts of imposed laws which they live under rather than live by them, slaves internally of their own weakness, ignorance and passions from whose worst effect they seek or need to be protected by another and external slavery, can never be a successful endeavour. They must shake off their fetters first in order to be fit for a higher freedom. Not that man has not to wear many a yoke in his progress upward ; but only the yoke which he accepts because it represents, the more perfectly the better, the inner law of his nature and its aspiration, will be entirely helpful to him. The rest buy their good results at a heavy cost and retard as much as or even more than they accelerate his progress.

The spiritual aim will recognise that man growing in his being must have as much free space as possible for all the members of that being to grow in their own strength, to find out themselves and their own potential-

ities. In their freedom they will err, because experience comes through many errors, but as each has in itself a divine principle, they will find it as their experience of themselves deepens and increases. Thus it will not lay a yoke upon science and philosophy or compel them to square their conclusions with any statement of religious or spiritual truth, as the old religions attempted. Each part of man's being has its own dharma which it must follow and will follow in the end, put on it what fetters you please. The dharma of science, thought and philosophy is to seek for truth by the intellect dispassionately, without prepossession and prejudgment, with no other first propositions than the law of thought and observation itself imposes. They are not bound to square their observations and conclusions with any current ideas of religious dogma or ethical rule or aesthetic prejudice. In the end, if left free in their action, they will find the unity of Truth with Good and Beauty and God and give these a greater meaning than any dogmatic religion or any formal ethics or any narrower aesthetical idea can give us. But meanwhile they must be left free even to deny God and good and beauty if they will, if their sincere observation of things so points them. For in the end all these denials must come round to a return to a larger truth of the things they deny. So, often, we find atheism both in individual and society a necessary passage to deeper religious and spiritual truth ; one has sometimes to deny God in order to find him ; the finding is inevitable at the end of all earnest denial and scepticism.

So too with Art, with the aesthetic being of man ; the highest aim of the aesthetic being is to find the Divine through beauty, the highest Art is that which by the use of form unseals the doors of the spirit. But in order that it may do that largely and sincerely, it must first endeavour to see and depict man and Nature and life for their own sake, in their own characteristic truth and

beauty ; for behind that lies always the beauty of the Divine within them and through that, even though at first veiled by them, it has to be revealed. The dogma that Art must be religious or not be at all, is a false dogma, just as is the claim that it must be subservient to ethics or utility or scientific truth or philosophy ; it may make use of these, but it has its own *swadharma* and it will rise to the widest spirituality by following it out with no other yoke than that of its own law of being.

Even with the lower being of man, though here we are naturally led to suppose that compulsion is the only remedy, the spiritual aim will seek for a free self-rule and development from within rather than a repression of his dynamic and vital being from without. All experience shows that man must be given a certain freedom to sin in action as well as to err in knowledge so long as he does not get from within his freedom from sin and error ; otherwise he cannot grow. Society for its own sake has to coerce the dynamic and vital man, but coercion only chains up the devil and alters at best his form of action into more mitigated and civilised movements ; it does not and cannot eliminate him. The real virtue of the dynamic and vital being can only come by finding a higher law and spirit for his activity within himself, and to give him that is the spiritual means of regeneration.

Thus spirituality will respect the freedom of the lower members, but it will not leave them to themselves ; it will present to them the truth of the spirit, in itself and translated into their own fields of action, in a light which illumines all their activities and shows them the highest law of their own freedom. It will not, for instance, escape from scientific materialism by a contempt for or a denial of Matter, but pursue it rather into its own affirmations and denials and show it there the Divine. If it cannot do that, it is because it is itself unenlightened or deficient, by being one-sided, in its light. It will not try to slay the

vitality by denying life, but will show life the divine in itself. If it cannot do that, it is because it has itself not yet wholly fathomed the meaning of the creation and the secret of the Avatar.

The spiritual aim will seek to fulfil itself therefore by a fullness of life and man's being in the individual and the race which will be the base for the heights of the spirit, the base becoming of one substance with the peaks. It will not proceed by a contempt and neglect of the body, nor by a starving of the vital being and its utmost bareness and even squalor, nor by a puritanic denial of art and beauty and the aesthetic joy of life, nor by a neglect of science and philosophy as poor, negligible or misleading intellectual pursuits,—though the temporary utility even of these exaggerations as against the opposite excesses need not be denied ; it will be all things to all, but in all it will be at once their highest aim and meaning and the most all-embracing expression of themselves in which all they are will be fulfilled. It will aim at establishing in society the true inner theocracy, not the false theocracy of a dominant Church or priesthood, but that of the inner Priest, Prophet and King. It will reveal to man the divinity in himself as the Light, Strength, Beauty, Good, Delight, Immortality that dwells within and build up in his outer life also the kingdom of God which is first discovered within us. It will show man the way to seek for the Divine in every way of his being, *sarvabhāvena**, and so find it and live in it, that however and in all ways he lives and acts, he shall live and act in that,† in the Divine, the Spirit, the utter Reality of his being.

Gita.

† Gita, *Sarvathā vartamano'pi sa yogī mayi vartate.*

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXXII

The idea of humanity as a single race of beings with a common life and a common general interest, ordinarily expressed in a large formula as the advance of human civilisation and the maintenance of the progress of mankind, is among the most characteristic and significant products of modern thought. An outcome of the European mind which proceeds characteristically from life-experience to the idea and, without going deeper, thence returns from the idea upon life in an attempt to change its outwards forms and institutions, its order and system, it has taken the shape known currently as internationalism. Internationalism is the attempt of the human mind and life to grow out of the national idea and form and even in a way to destroy it in the interest of the larger synthesis of mankind. An idea proceeding on these lines needs always to attach itself to some actual force or developing power in the life of the times before it can exercise a practical effect, and usually it suffers by contact with the interests and prepossessions of its grosser ally some lesser or greater diminution of itself or even a distortion, and in that form, no longer pure and absolute, enters on the first stage of practice.

The idea of internationalism was born of the thought of the eighteenth century and took some kind of voice in the first idealistic stages of the French Revolution. But at that time it was rather a vague intellectual sentiment than a clear idea seeing its way to practice, and 't found no

strong force in life to help it to take visible body. What came out of the French Revolution and the struggle that grew around it, was a complete and self-conscious nationalism and not internationalism. During the nineteenth century we see the larger idea growing again in the minds of thinkers, sometimes in a modified form, sometimes in a pure idealism, till allying itself with the growing forces of socialism and anarchism it took a clear body and a recognisable vital force. In its absolute form it became the internationalism of the intellectuals, intolerant of nationalism as a narrow spirit of the past, contemptuous of patriotism as an irrational prejudice, a maleficent corporate egoism characteristic of narrow intellects and creative of arrogance, prejudice, hatred, oppression, division and strife between nation and nation, a gross survival of the past which the growth of reason was destined to destroy. It is founded on a view of things which looks at man in his manhood only and casts away all those physical and social accidents of birth, rank, class, colour, creed, nationality, which have been erected into so many walls and screens behind which man has hidden himself from his fellow-man and turned them into sympathy-proof shelters and trenches from which he wages against him a war of defence and aggression, war of nations, war of continents, war of classes, war of colour with colour, creed with creed, culture with culture. All this barbarism the idea of the intellectual internationalist seeks to abolish by putting man face to face with man on the basis of their common human sympathy, aims, highest interests of the future. It is entirely futurist in its view and turns away from the confused and darkened good of the past to the purer good of the future when man, at last beginning to become really intelligent and ethical, will shake away from him all these sources of prejudice and passion and evil and humanity will become one in idea and feeling and life as it is, in spite of itself, one in its status on earth and its destiny.

The height and nobility of the idea is not to be questioned, and certainly a mankind which set its life upon this basis, would make a better, purer, more peaceful and enlightened race than anything we can hope to have at present. But as the human being is now made, the pure idea, though always a great power, is also afflicted by a great weakness. It has an eventual capacity, once born, of taking hold of the rest of the human being and forcing him in the end to acknowledge its truth and make some kind of attempt to embody it ; that is its strength. But also because man at present lives more in the outward than in the inward, is governed principally by his vital existence, sensations, feelings and customary mentality rather than by his higher thought-mind, feels himself in these to be really alive, really to exist and be, while the world of ideas is to him something remote and abstract and, however powerful and interesting in its way, not a living thing, the pure idea seems, until it is embodied in life, something not quite real ; that abstractness and remoteness is its weakness.

For it imposes on the idea an undue haste to get itself recognised by life and embodied. If it could have confidence in its strength and be content to grow, to insist and to impress itself till it got into the spirit of man, it might conceivably become a real part of his soul-life, a permanent power in his psychology and succeed in really remoulding his whole life in its image. But it has inevitably a desire to get as soon as possible into the life, for until then it does not feel itself strong, cannot quite be sure that it has vindicated its truth. It hurries into action before it has real knowledge of itself and thereby prepares its own disappointment, even when it seems to triumph and fulfil itself ; and in order to succeed it allies itself with powers and movements which are impelled by another aim than its own, but are glad enough to get its aid so that they may strengthen their own

case and claim. Thus when it realises itself, it does it in a mixed, impure and ineffective form. Life accepts it as a partial habit, but not completely, not quite sincerely. That has been the history of every idea in succession and one reason at least why there is almost always something unreal, inconclusive and tormented about human progress.

There are many conditions and tendencies in human life at present which are favourable to the progress of the internationalist idea, and especially the drawing closer of the knots of international life, the multiplication of points of contact and threads of communication and the increasing community in thought, in science and in knowledge. Science especially has been a great force in this direction ; for science is a thing common to all men in its conclusions, open to all in its methods, available to all in its results ; it is international in its very nature ; there can be no such thing as a national science, but only the nation's contribution to the work and growth of science which are the indivisible inheritance of all humanity. Therefore it is easier for men of science or those strongly influenced by science to grow into the international spirit, and all the world is now beginning to feel the influence and to live in it. Science also has created that closer contact of every part of the world with every other part, out of which some sort of international mind is growing. Even cosmopolitan habits of life are now not uncommon and there are a fair number of persons who are as much or more citizens of the world as citizens of their own nation. The growth of knowledge is interesting the peoples in each other's art, culture, religion, ideas, and is breaking down at many points the prejudice, arrogance and exclusiveness of the old nationalistic sentiment. Religion, which ought to have led the way, but owing to its greater dependence on its external parts and its infrarational rather than its spiritual impulses has been as much, or even more, a sower of discord as a teacher of unity,—religion

is beginning to realise, a little dimly and ineffectively as yet, that spirituality is after all its own chief business and true aim, and that it is also the common element and the common bond of all religions. As these influences grow and come more and more consciously to cooperate with each other, it might be hoped that the necessary psychological modification will quietly, gradually, but still irresistibly and at last with an increasing force of rapidity produce itself which will prepare a real and fundamental change in the life of humanity.

But this is at present a slow process, and meanwhile the internationalist idea, eager for effectuation, has allied and almost identified itself with two increasingly powerful movements which have both assumed an international character, Socialism and Anarchism, the latter of the intellectual type familiar in Europe. Indeed it is this alliance that has most commonly gone by the name of internationalism. But this socialistic and anarchistic internationalism has recently been put to the test, the fiery test of the European war, and thus tried it has been found sadly wanting. In every country the Socialist party has shed its internationalist promise with the greatest ease and lightness, German socialism, the protagonist of the idea, massively leading the way in this abjuration. It is true that a small minority in each country has either remained heroically faithful to its principles or soon returned to them, and as the general weariness of the great international massacre grows, even the majority have been showing a sensible turn in the same direction ; but this has been rather the fruit of circumstance than of principle. Russian socialism, it may be said, has, at least in its extremer form, shown a stronger root of internationalistic feeling. But what it has actually attempted to accomplish, is rather a development of Labour rule on the basis of a purified nationalism, non-aggressive and self-contained, than the larger international idea, though this larger idea, it might fairly be said, must

be the necessary consequence and corollary of a non-aggressive nationalism if generally accepted. In any case the actual results of the Russian attempt show only up to the present a failure of the idea to give the vital strength and efficiency which would justify it to life, and have served much more as a telling argument against internationalism than a justification of its truth or at least of its applicability in the present stage of human progress.

For what is the cause of this almost total bankruptcy of the ideal under the strong test of life? Partly it may be because the triumph of socialism is not necessarily bound up with the progress of internationalism. Socialism is really an attempt to complete the growth of the national community by making the individual do, what he has never yet done, live for the nation more than for himself. It is an outgrowth of the national, not of the international idea. No doubt, when the society of the nation has been perfected, the society of nations can and even must be formed; but this is a later possible or eventual result of Socialism, not its primary vital necessity; and in the crises of life it is the primary vital necessity which tells, while the other and remoter element betrays itself to be a mere idea not yet ready for accomplishment. It can only become powerful when it also becomes either a vital or a psychological necessity. The real truth, the real cause of the failure is that internationalism is as yet, except with some exceptional men, merely an idea, not yet a thing near to our vital feelings or otherwise a part of our psychology. The normal socialist, syndicalist or anarchist cannot escape from the general human feeling and in the test he too turns out, even though he were a professed *sans-patrie* in ordinary times, in his inner heart and being a nationalist. As a vital fact, moreover, these movements have been a revolt of Labour aided by a number of intellectuals against the established state of things, and they have only allied themselves with inter-

nationalism because that too is in intellectual revolt and because its idea helps them in the battle. If Labour comes to power, will it keep or shed its internationalistic tendencies ? The experience of countries in which it is at the head of affairs, does not give an encouraging answer, and it may at least be said that unless at that time the psychological change in humanity has gone much farther than it has now, Labour in power is likely to shed more of the internationalist feeling than it will succeed in keeping and to act very much from the old human motives.

No doubt, the war itself has been an explosion of all that was dangerous and evil in successful nationalism, and the resulting conflagration will burn up many things that needed to die ; it will be or ought to be largely purificatory. It has also already strengthened the international idea and forced it on governments and peoples. But we cannot rely too greatly on ideas and resolutions formed in a moment of abnormal crisis under the violent stress of exceptional circumstances. Some effect there will be, some recognition of juster principles in international dealings, some attempt at a better, more rational or at least a more convenient international order. But until the idea of humanity has grown not only upon the intelligence, but in the sentiments, feelings, natural sympathies and mental habits of man, the progress made is likely to be more in external adjustments than in the vital matters, more in a use of the ideal for mixed and egoistic purposes than at once or soon in a large and sincere realisation of the ideal. Until man in his heart is ready, a profound change of the world conditions cannot come ; or it can only be brought about by force, physical force or else force of circumstances, and that leaves all the real work to be done. A frame may have then been made, but the soul will have still to grow into that mechanical body.

The Future Poetry

POETIC VISION AND THE MANTRA

This highest intensity of style and movement which is the crest of the poetical impulse in its self-expression, the point at which the aesthetic, the vital, the intellectual element of poetic speech pass into the spiritual, justifies itself perfectly when it is the body of a deep, high or wide spiritual vision into which the life-sense, the thought, the emotion of the beauty in the thing discovered and its expression,—for all great poetic utterance is discovery,—rise on the wave of the culminating poetic inspiration into an ecstasy of sight. In the lesser poets these moments are rare and come like brilliant accidents, angel's visits, in the greater they are more frequent outbursts, but in the greatest they abound because they arise from a constant faculty of poetic vision and poetic speech which has its lesser and its greater moments, but never entirely fails them.

Vision is the characteristic power of the poet, as is discriminative thought the essential gift of the philosopher and analytic observation the natural genius of the scientist. The Kavi * was in the idea of the ancients the

The Sanskrit word for poet. In classical Sanskrit it is applied to any maker of verse or even of prose, but in the Vedic it meant the poet-seer who saw and found the inspired word of his vision.

seer and revealer of truth, and though we have wandered far enough from that ideal to demand from him only the pleasure of the ear and the amusement of the aesthetic faculty, still all great poetry preserves something of that higher truth of its own aim and significance. Poetry, in fact, being Art, must attempt to make us see, and since it is to the inner senses that it has to address itself,—for the ear is its only physical gate of entry and even there its real appeal is to an inner hearing,—and since its object is to make us live within ourselves what the poet has embodied in his verse, it is an inner sight which he opens in us, and this inner sight must have been intense in him before he can awaken it in us.

Therefore the greatest poets have been always those who have had a large and powerful interpretative and intuitive vision of Nature and life and man and whose poetry has arisen out of that in a supreme revelatory utterance of it. Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Valmiki, Kalidas, however much they may differ in everything else, are at one in having this as the fundamental character of their greatness. Their supremacy does not lie essentially in a greater thought-power or a more lavish imagery or a more penetrating force of passion and emotion; these things they may have had, one being more gifted in one direction, another in others, but these other powers were aids to their poetic expression rather than the essence or the source of it. There is often more thought in a short essay of Bacon's than in a whole play of Shakespeare's, but not even a hundred cryptograms can make him the author of the dramas; for, as he showed when he tried to write poetry, the very nature of his thought-power and the characteristic way of expression of the born philosophical thinker hampered him in poetic expression. It was the constant outstreaming of form and thought and image from an abundant vision of life which made Shakespeare, whatever his other defi-

ciencies, the sovereign dramatic poet. Sight is the essential poetic gift. The archetypal poet in a world of original ideas is, we may say, a Soul that sees in itself intimately this world and all the others and God and Nature and the life of beings and sets flowing from its centre a surge of creative rhythm and word-images which become the expressive body of the vision; and the great poets are those who repeat in some measure this ideal creation, *kavayah satvaçrutah*, seers and hearers of the poetic truth and poetic word.

The tendency of the modern mind at the present day seems to be towards laying a predominant value on the thought in poetry. We live still in an age which is in a great intellectual trouble and ferment about life and the world and is developing enormously the human intelligence,—often at the expense of other powers which are no less necessary to self-knowledge,—in order to grapple with life and master it. We are seeking always and in many directions to decipher the enigma of things, the cryptogram of the worlds which we are set to read, and to decipher it by the aid of the intellect; and for the most part we are much too busy living and thinking to have leisure to be silent and see. We expect the poet to use his great mastery of language to help us in this endeavour; we ask of him not so much perfect beauty of song or largeness of creative vision as a message to our perplexed and seeking intellects. Therefore we hear constantly today of the “philosophy” of a poet, even the most inveterate beautifier of commonplaces being forcibly gifted by his admirers with a philosophy, or of his message,—the message of Tagore, the message of Whitman. We are asking then of the poet to be, not a supreme singer for an inspired seer of the worlds, but a philosopher, a prophet, a teacher, even something perhaps of a religious or ethical preacher. It is necessary therefore to say that when I claim for the poet the role of a seer of Truth and

find the source of great poetry in a great and revealing vision of life or God or the gods or man or Nature, I do not mean that it is necessary for him to have an intellectual philosophy of life or a message for humanity, which he chooses to express in verse because he has the metrical gift and the gift of imagery, or a solution of the problems of the age or a mission to improve mankind, or, as it is said, "to leave the world better than he found it." As a man, he may have these things, but the less he allows them to get the better of his poetical gift, the happier it will be for his poetry. Material for his poetry they may give, an influence in it they may be, provided they are transmuted into vision and life by the poetical spirit, but they can be neither its soul nor its aim, nor give the law to its creative activity and its expression.

The poet-seer sees differently, thinks in another way, voices himself in quite another manner than the philosopher or the prophet. The prophet announces the Truth as the word of God or his command, he is the giver of the message; the poet shows us Truth in its power of beauty, in its symbol or image, or reveals it to us in the workings of Nature or in the workings of life, and when he has done that, his whole work is done; he need not be its explicit spokesman. The philosopher's business is to discriminate Truth and put its parts and aspects into intellectual relation with each other; the poet's is to seize and embody aspects of Truth in their living relations, or rather,—for that is too philosophical a language,—to see her features and excited by the vision create in the beauty of her image.

No doubt, the prophet may have in him a poet who breaks out often into speech and surrounds with the vivid atmosphere of life the directness of his message; he may follow up his injunction "Take no thought for the morrow," by a revealing image of the beauty of the truth he enounces, in the life of Nature, in the figure of th-

lily, or link it to human life by the apologue and the parable ; the philosopher may bring in the aid of colour and image to give some relief and hue to his dry light of reason and water his arid path of abstractions with some healing dew of poetry. But these are ornaments and not the substance of his work ; and if the philosopher makes his thought substance of poetry, he ceases to be a philosophical thinker and becomes a poet-seer of Truth. Thus the more rigid metaphysicians are perhaps right in denying to Nietzsche the name of philosopher ; for Nietzsche does not think, but always sees, turbidly or clearly, rightly or distortedly, but with the eye of the seer rather than with the brain of the thinker. On the other hand we may get great poetry which is full of a prophetic enthusiasm of utterance or is largely or even wholly philosophic in its matter ; but this prophetic poetry gives us no direct message, only a mass of sublime inspirations of thought and image, and this philosophic poetry is poetry and lives as poetry only in so far as it departs from the method, the expression, the way of seeing proper to the philosophic mind. It must be vision pouring itself into thought-images and not thought trying to observe truth and distinguish.

In earlier days this distinction was not at all clearly understood and therefore we find even poets of great power attempting to set philosophic systems to music or even much more prosaic matter than a philosophic system, Hesiod and Virgil setting about even a manual of agriculture in verse ! In Rome, always a little blunt of perception in the aesthetic mind, her two greatest poets fell a victim to this unhappy conception, with results which are a lesson and a warning to all posterity. Lucretius' work lives only, in spite of the majestic energy behind it, by its splendid digressions into pure poetry, Virgil's *Georgics* by fine passages and pictures of Nature and beauties of word and image, but its substance is lifeless matter which

has floated to us on the stream of Time saved for the beauty of its setting. India, and perhaps India alone, had managed once or twice to turn this kind of philosophic attempt into a poetic success, in the Gita, in the Upanishads and some minor works modelled upon them. But the difference is great. The Gita owes its poetical success to its starting from a great and critical situation in life, having that in view and always returning upon it, and to its method which is to seize on a spiritual experience or moment or stage of the inner life and throw it into the form of thought; and this, though a delicate operation, can keep well within the limits of the poetic manner of speech. Only where it overburdens itself with metaphysical matter and deviates into sheer philosophic definition and discrimination, which happens especially in two or three of its closing chapters, does the poetic voice sink under the weight, even occasionally into flattest versified prose. The Upanishads too, and much more, are not at all philosophic thinking, but spiritual seeing, a rush of spiritual intuitions throwing themselves inevitably into the language of poetry, shaped out of fire and life, because that is their natural speech and a more intellectual utterance would have falsified their vision.

Nowadays we have clarified our aesthetic perceptions sufficiently to avoid the mistake of the Roman poets; but in a subtler form the intellectual tendency still shows a dangerous spirit of encroachment. For the impulse to teach is upon us, the inclination to be an observer and critic of life,—there could be no more perilous definition than Arnold's poetic "criticism of life," in spite of the saving epithet,—to clothe, merely, in the forms of poetry a critical or philosophic idea of life to the detriment of our vision. Allegory with its intellectual ingenuities, its facile wedding of the abstract idea and the concrete image, shows a tendency to invade again the domain of poetry. And there are other signs of the intellectual

malady of which we are almost all of us the victims. Therefore it is well to insist that the native power of poetry is in its sight, not in its intellectual thought-matter, and its safety is in adhering to this native principle of vision and allowing its conception, its thought, its emotion, its presentation, its structure to rise out of that or compelling it to rise into that before it takes its finished form. The poetic vision of life is not a critical or intellectual or philosophic view of it, but a soul-view, a seizing by the inner sense ; and the mantra is not in its substance or form poetic enunciation of a philosophic truth, but the rhythmic revelation or intuition arising out of the soul's sight of God and Nature and the world and the inner truth—occult to the outward eye—of all that peoples it, the secrets of their life and being.

With regard to the view of life which Art must take, distinctions are constantly laid down, such as the necessity of a subjective or an objective treatment⁺ or of a realistic or an idealistic view, which mislead more than they enlighten. Certainly, one poet may seem to excel in the concrete presentation of things and falter or be less sure in his grasp of the purely subjective, while another may move freely in the more subjective worlds and be less at home in the concrete ; and both may be poets of a high order. But when we look closer, we see that just as a certain objectivity is necessary to make poetry live and the thing seen stand out before our eyes, so on the other hand even the most objective presentation starts from an inner view and subjective process of creation, for the poet really creates out of himself and not out of what he sees outwardly : that outward seeing only serves to excite the inner vision to its work. Otherwise his work would be a mechanical construction and putting together, not a living creation.

Sheer objectivity brings us down from art to photography ; and the attempt to diminish the subjective view

to the vanishing-point so as to get an accurate presentation is proper to science, not to poetry. We are not thereby likely to get a greater truth or reality, but very much the reverse ; for the scientific presentation of things, however valid in its own domain, that of the senses and the observing reason, is not true to the soul, not certainly the integral truth or the whole vision of things, because it gives only process and machinery and the mechanic law of things, but not their inner life and spirit. That is the error in the theory of realism. Realistic art does not and cannot give us a scientifically accurate presentation of life, because Art is not and cannot be Science. What it does do, is to make an arbitrary selection of motives, forms and hues, sometimes of dull blacks and greys and browns and dingy whites and sordid yellows, sometimes of violent blacks and reds, and the result is sometimes a thing of power and sometimes a nightmare. Idealistic art makes a different selection and produces either a work of power or beauty or else a false and distorted day-dream. In these distinctions there is no safety ; nor can any rule be laid down for the poet, since he must necessarily go by what he is and what he sees, except that he should work from the living poetic centre within him and not exile himself into artificial standpoints.

From our present point of view we may say that the poet may do as he pleases in all that is not the essential matter. Thought-matter may be prominent in his work or life-substance predominate. He may proceed by sheer force of presentation or by direct power of interpretation. He may make this world his text, or wander into regions beyond, or soar straight into the pure empyrean of the infinite. To arrive at the mantra he may start from the colour of a rose, or the power or beauty of a character, or the splendour of an action, or go away from all these into his own secret soul and its most hidden movements. The one thing needful is that he should be able to go

beyond the word or image he uses or the form of the thing he sees, not be limited by them, but get into the light of that which they have the power to reveal and flood them with it until they overflow with its suggestions or seem even to lose themselves and disappear into the revelation. At the highest he himself disappears into sight; the personality of the seer is lost in the eternity of the vision, and the Spirit of all seems alone to be there speaking out sovereignly its own secrets.

But the poetic vision, like everything else, follows necessarily the evolution of the human mind and according to the age and environment, it has its levels, its ascents and descents and its returns. The eye of early man is turned upon the physical world about him, the interest of the story of life and its primary ideas and emotions; he sees man and his world only, or sees the other worlds and their gods and beings in that image also, but magnified and heightened. He asks little of poetry except a more forceful vision of these which will help him to see them more largely and feel them more strongly and give him a certain inspiration to live them more powerfully. Afterwards he begins to intellectualise, but still on the same subject-matter, and he asks now from the poet a view of them enlightened by the inspired reason and beautifully shaped by the first strong and clear joy in his developing aesthetic sense. A vital poetry appealing to the imagination through the sense-mind and the emotions and a poetry interpretative of life to the intelligence are the fruit of these ages. Later poetry tends always to return on these forms with a more subtilised intellect and a richer life-experience.

Great things may be done by poetry on this basis, but it is evident that the poet will have a certain difficulty in getting to a deeper vision, because he has to lean entirely on the external thought and form, be subservient to it and get at what truth he can that may be beyond them with their veil still thickly interposing. A higher level comes

when the mind of man begins to see more intimately the forces behind life, the powers concealed by our subjective existence, and the poet can attempt to reveal them more directly or at least to use the outward physical and vital and thought symbol only as a suggestion of greater things. Yet a higher level is attained, more depth possible when the soul in things comes nearer to man or other worlds than the physical open themselves to him. And the entire liberation of the poetic vision to see most profoundly and the poetic power to do its highest work must arrive when the spiritual itself is the possession of the greatest minds and the age stands on the verge of its revelation.

Therefore it is not sufficient for poetry to attain high intensities of word and rhythm ; it must have, to fill them, an answering intensity of vision. And this does not depend only on the individual power of vision of the poet, but on the mind of his age and country, its level of thought and experience, the adequacy of its symbols, the depth of its spiritual attainment. A lesser poet in a greater age may give us occasionally things which exceed in this kind the work of less favoured immortals. The religious poetry of the later Indian tongues has for us fervours of poetic revelation which in the great classics are absent, even though no mediaeval poet can rank in power with Valmiki and Kalidasa. The modern literatures of Europe commonly fall short of the Greek perfection of harmony and form, but they give us what the greatest Greek poets had not and could not have. And in our own days a poet of secondary power in his moments of inspiration can get to a vision for more satisfying to us than Shakespeare or Dante. Greatest of all is the promise of the age that is coming, if it fulfils its possibilities ; for it is an age in which all the worlds are beginning to open to man's gaze and invite his experience, and in all he is near to the revelation of the Spirit of which they are, as we choose, the veils, the significant forms and symbols or else the transparent raiment.

A. G.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XLIV

REBIRTH

Birth is the first spiritual mystery of the universe, death is the second which gives its double point of perplexity to the mystery of birth ; and life, which would otherwise be the self-evident fact of existence, becomes itself a mystery by virtue of these two which seem to be its beginning and its end and yet in a thousand ways betray themselves as neither ; for all the known circumstances and results of birth presuppose an unknown before and there is by the universality and persistence of life an inconclusiveness in death which points to a hereafter. What were we before birth and what are we after death, are the questions, the answer of the one depending upon that of the other, which the intellect of man has put to itself from the beginning without even now resting in any final solution. The intellect indeed can hardly give the final answer : for that must in its very nature lie beyond the data of the physical consciousness and memory, whether of the race or the individual, yet these are the sole data the intellect is in the habit of consulting with something like confidence. Therefore it wheels from one hypothesis to

another and calls each in turn a conclusion. Moreover the question depends upon the nature, source and object of the cosmic movement, and as we determine these, so we shall have to conclude about birth and life and death, the before and the hereafter.

The first question is whether the before and the after are physical and vital or in some way mental and spiritual. If Matter were the principle of the universe, as the materialist alleges, if the truth of things were to be found in the first formula arrived at by Bhṛigu son of Varuna when he meditated upon the eternal Brahman, "Matter is the Eternal, for from Matter all beings are born and by Matter all beings exist and to Matter all beings depart and return," then there would be no farther question. The before of our bodies would be a gathering out of various physical elements through the instrumentality of the seed and food and the before of our conscious being a preparation by heredity or by some other physically vital or physically mental operation in universal Matter specialising through the bodies of our parents. The after of the body would be a dissolution into the material elements and the after of the conscious being a relapse into Matter with some survival of the effects of its activity in the general mind and life of humanity. This last quite illusory survival would be our only immortality. But since the universality of Matter can no longer be held as giving any sufficient explanation of the existence of Mind,—and indeed Matter itself can no longer be explained by Matter alone, for it does not appear to be self-existent,—we are thrown back from this easy and obvious solution to other hypotheses.

One of these is the old religious myth and dogmatic mystery of a God who hourly creates immortal souls out of his own being or else by his "breath" or life-power entering, it is to be presumed, into material Nature or rather into the bodies he creates in it and vivifying them internal-

ly with a spiritual principle. As a mystery of faith this miraculous feat of spiritual chemistry need not be examined, for the mysteries of faith are intended to be beyond question and scrutiny ; but reason and philosophy need not waste much of their time over it. For it involves two paradoxes which need more justification before they can even be accorded any consideration ; first, the hourly creation of beings who have a beginning in time but no end in time, and are moreover born by the birth of the body, but do not end by the death of the body ; secondly, the assumption of a ready-made mass of combined qualities, virtues, vices, capacities, defects, temperamental and other advantages and handicaps, not made by them at all through growth, but made for them by arbitrary fiat, yet for which and for the perfect use of which they are held responsible by their Creator. We may hold certain things as legitimate presumptions of the philosophic reason and fairly throw the burden of disproving them on their denier ; and among these we may hold, first, that that which has no end, must necessarily have had no beginning, because all that begins must have an end by cessation of the causes that created it or the dissolution of the materials of which it is compounded ; and secondly, that where we see in Time a certain stage of development, there must have been a past to that development. Therefore if the soul enters this life with a certain development of personality, either it must have prepared it in other precedent lives here or elsewhere or it must itself be something quite independent of life and personality, something which is only fortuitously connected with the mind and body and cannot therefore be really affected by what is done or developed in this mental and bodily living. If the soul is immortal, it must also be eternal, beginningless in the past, even as endless in the future ; and if eternal, then either a changeless self unaffected by life and its terms or a timeless Purusha, an

eternal and spiritual Person manifesting or causing in time a stream of changing personality. And if the latter, it can only do it in a world of birth and death by the assumption of successive bodies, in a word by constant or by repeated rebirth into the forms of Nature.

But the immortality or eternity of the soul does not at once impose itself, even if we reject the explanation of all things by eternal Matter. For we have also the hypothesis of the creation of an illusory soul by some power of the original unity from which all things began, by which they live and into which they cease. On one side there is the modern hypothesis of an Inconscient, an eternal Becoming, which manifests itself in Life-force with the appearance of Matter as one objective end of its operations and the appearance of Mind as the other subjective end, the interaction of these two phenomena of Life-force creating our human existence. On the other side we have the old Advaitist theory of a sole-existing Superconscient, an eternal unmodifiable Being which creates by Maya an illusion of soul-life in this world of phenomenal mind and matter, both of them unreal, since one unmodifiable and eternal Self or Spirit is the only entity. Or we have the Buddhist theory of a Nihil or Nirvana and, somehow imposed upon that, an eternal energy of successive becoming, Karma, which creates the illusion of self and soul by a constant continuity of associations, ideas, memories, sensations, images. In their root all these three are practically one ; for even the Advaitist Superconscient is for the purposes of the universal action an Inconscient ; it is aware only of its unmodifiable self-existence, and its creation of the world by Maya seems to take place out of a sort of self-absorbed sleep of consciousness, *sushupti*, out of which yet all active consciousness and modification of phenomenal becoming emerges, just as in the modern theory our consciousness is an impermanent development out of the Inconscient. And in all three the apparent soul of

the creature is not immortal in the sense of eternity, but has a beginning and an end in Time, is a creation by Maya or other force out of the Inconscient or Superconscient, and is therefore impermanent in its existence ; and in all three rebirth is either unnecessary or else illusory, the repetition of an illusion.

For whether we suppose the one eternal existence to be a vital becoming or a spiritual being or a nameless non-being, that which we call the soul is only a changing mass or stream of phenomena of consciousness which has come into existence in the wave of real or illusory becoming and will cease to exist there. It is not eternal and its only immortality is a greater or less continuity in the becoming. It is not a real and always existent Person who supports and experiences the mass of phenomena. That which supports them, that which really and always exists is the one eternal Becoming or the one eternal Being or the continual stream of energy in its workings. For such an illusory soul to manifest, it is not necessary that the same illusory soul should persist and assume always body after body, form after form, until it is dissolved at last by some process which annuls altogether the original impetus which created it. It is quite possible that as each form is developed, a consciousness develops corresponding to the form, and as the form dissolves, the corresponding consciousness dissolves with it ; the One which forms all, alone endures. Or as the body is gathered out of the general elements of matter and begins its life with birth and ends with death, so the mental consciousness may be developed out of the general elements of mind and equally begin with birth and end with death. Here too, the One who supplies by Maya or otherwise the force which creates the elements, is the sole thing that endures. In none of these theories of existence is rebirth an absolute necessity or inevitable result of the theory.

As a matter of fact, however, we find a great difference. Modern thought starts from the physical body as the basis of our existence and recognises the reality of no other world except this material universe. What it sees here is a mental consciousness associated with the life of the body, giving in its birth no sign of previous individual existence and leaving in its end no sign of subsequent individual existence. What was before birth, is the life-force persisting in the seed transmitted by the parents and giving by past development a mental and physical stamp to the new individual mind and body created ; what remains after death, is the same life-force persisting in the seed transmitted to the child and in the farther development of the mental and physical life carried with it. And behind both of these is the universal Life of which these are individualised, evolutionary and phenomenal becomings ;—that which shaped the individual by its pre-existent and its surrounding action, takes also some result of his life and works into its subsequent action and helps by it to create the mental and vital environment of other individuals. This universal Life creates a real world and real beings, but the conscious personality in these beings is not that of an eternal nor even a persistent soul or supraphysical Person : it does not outlast the death of the body. There is here no reason or room for admitting rebirth as a part of the scheme of things.

But what if it were found with the increase of our knowledge, as certain researches and discoveries seem to presage, that the dependence of the mental being in us on the body is not so complete as we at first naturally conclude it to be from the study of the data of physical existence and the physical universe alone ? What if it were found that the human personality survives the death of the body and moves between other planes and this material world ? The prevalent modern idea of existence would then have to widen itself and admit, first, that the

universal Life had a wider range than the physical. It would have practically to readopt the ancient idea of a subtle body which the mental consciousness inhabits after death and which must necessarily then have been created for it either before birth or during life.

It would besides be faced with two alternatives. For either the evolving Life develops the subtle body here before entering a human body at all, and in that case our personality has previously inhabited animal forms, or else it develops it in the human forms by the force of a sudden growth in mental consciousness. In the former case the animal survives the death of the physical body and has some kind of soul which after death either occupies other animal forms and finally a human body or else enters other planes of life than the physical and constantly returns here until it is ready for the human life ; in the latter the power thus to survive the death of the physical body would only arrive with the human stage of the evolution. In the former case the theory of rebirth in some form either of Pythagorean transmigration or else of the Indian idea of a passing on and a return would have to be admitted ; in the latter this would not be necessary, for it might be supposed that the human personality once attaining to other planes need not return, that it would naturally pursue its existence upon that higher plane to which it had arisen. Only if faced with actual evidence of a return to earth, would a larger supposition be compulsory.

But even then the developing vitalistic theory need not spiritualise itself, need not admit the real existence of a soul or its immortality or eternity. It might regard the personality still as a phenomenal creation of the universal life by the interaction of consciousness and physical form and force but with a wider, more variable and subtler action of both and another history than it had at first seen to be possible. It might even arrive at a sort of

vitalistic Buddhism, admitting Karma, but as the action of a universal Life-force, admitting as one of its results the continuity of the stream of personality in rebirth by mental association and denying any real self for the individual or any eternal Being other than this ever active vital Becoming. On the other hand it might, obeying a turn of thought which is now beginning to gain a little in strength, admit a universal Self as the primal reality and arrive at a certain form of spiritual Monism.

Adwaita, like Buddhism, started precisely from these perceptions of supraphysical planes and worlds and a commerce between them which determined a constant passage and return to earth of the human personality. Their thought had behind it an ancient perception and even experience or at least an age-long tradition of a before and after for the personality which was not confined to the experience of the physical universe; and they based themselves on a view of self and world which regarded mental consciousness as the primary phenomenon and physical being as only a secondary and dependent phenomenon. It was around these data that they had to determine the relations of the eternal reality and the phenomenal becoming. Therefore they admitted the passage of the personality from this to other worlds and its return into form upon earth. But the rebirth thus admitted was not a real rebirth of a real spiritual Person into the forms of material existence.

For in Buddhistic thought the existence of the Self was denied and rebirth could only mean a continuity of the ideas, sensations and actions which moved between different planes of idea and sensation and created by the conscious continuity of their streaming a phenomenon of self and a phenomenon of personality. In the Adwaitic there was indeed talk of a Jivatman, an individual self, and even of a real self of the individual; but this concession to our normal language and ideas was only ap-

parent. For it turns out that there is no real individual, no "I" or "you", and therefore there can be no real self of the individual, even no true universal self, but only a Self apart from the universe, ever unborn, ever unmodified, ever unaffected by the mutations of phenomena. Birth, life, death, the whole mass of individual and cosmic experience becomes an illusion; even bondage and release are an illusion: they amount only to the conscious continuity of the illusory experiences of the ego, itself a creation of the great Illusion, and the cessation of the continuity and the consciousness into the superconsciousness of that which alone was, is and ever will be, or rather which has nothing to do with Time.

Thus while in the vitalistic view of things there is a real universe and a real though brief temporary becoming of individual life which, even though there is no ever-enduring Purusha, yet gives a considerable importance to our individual experience and actions,—for these are truly effective in a real becoming,—in the Advaitic theory these things have no real importance or true effect, but only a dream-consequence. For even release takes place only in the dream; in reality there is no one bound and no one released, the sole-existent Self being untouched by these illusions of the ego. To escape from the all-destroying sterility which would be the only logical result, we have to lend a practical reality, however false it may be eventually, to this dream-consequence and an immense importance to our bondage and individual release, even though the individual and his life are unreal and to the one real Self both the bondage and the release are non-existent. But in this compulsory concession to the tyrannous falsehood of Maya the sole possible importance of life and experience lies in the measure in which they prepare for its negation and for the self-elimination of the individual out of the cosmic illusion.

This, however, is an extreme view and consequence

of the monistic thesis, and the older Vedantism of the Upanishads does not go quite so far. It admits an actual and temporal becoming of the Eternal and therefore a real universe ; the individual too assumes a certain reality, for each individual is in himself the Eternal who has assumed name and form and enjoys through him the experiences of life in an ever-cycling wheel of manifestation to which he binds himself by the desire of the individual, which becomes the effective cause of rebirth, and maintains it by the mind's turning away from the knowledge of his eternal self to the preoccupations of his temporary becoming. With the cessation of this desire and of this ignorance the Eternal in the individual draws away from the mutations of individual personality and experience to his timeless, impersonal and immutable being.

But this reality of the individual is quite temporal ; it has no enduring foundation even of perpetual recurrence in Time, and rebirth, though an actuality, is no inevitable consequence of the relation between his individuality and the purpose of the manifestation. For the manifestation seems to have no purpose except the will of the Eternal towards manifestation, and this could as well be effected without the machinery of rebirth. It could be effected through an assumption of individuality corresponding to the name and form, which could very well begin in each individual case with the appearance of the form and end with its cessation. Individual would follow individual as wave follows wave, the sea remaining always the same. The necessity for this purpose of an individualised consciousness persistently continuous, assuming name after name and form after form and moving between different planes, does not appear, or does not strongly impose itself ; still less that of an evolutionary progress inevitably pursued from higher to higher form such as the ancient theory of rebirth supposes.*

* It is after millions of lives in the vegetable and animal form. says the Tantra that the soul can assume a human body

So, we might say indeed, the Eternal has actually chosen to manifest ; but the original determining Truth does not become imperatively apparent. Desire cannot be it, for the world is created by Ananda* and not by the individual's desire which comes in only as part of the cosmic machinery. The view of universal and individual being which we have taken, seeks on the other hand to account for this actual disposition of the cosmic manifestation and the individual destiny ; for, if it is once admitted, the progressive ascent, the life in worlds beyond and the re-birth of man upon earth become necessary consequences of the inherent law of being and of the purpose of the divine manifestation.

Essays on the Gita

BEYOND THE GUNAS

So far then extends the determinism of Nature and what it amounts to is this that the ego from which we act, is itself an instrument of the action of Prakriti and cannot therefore be free from the control of Prakriti ; the will of the ego is a will determined by Prakriti, it is a part of the nature as it has been formed in us by the sum of its own past action and self-modification, and by the nature in us so formed and the will in it so formed our present action also is determined. It is said by some that the first initiating action is always free to our choice, however much all that follows may be determined by that, and in this power of initiation and its effect on our future lies our responsibility. But where is that first action in Nature which has no determining past behind it, where that present condition of our nature which is not in sum and detail the result of the action of our past nature ? We have that impression of a free initial act because we are living at every moment from our present on towards our future and we do not live back constantly from our present into our past, so that what is strongly vivid to our minds is the present and its consequences while we have a much less vivid hold of our present as entirely the consequence of our past ; this latter we are apt to look on as if it were

dead and done with. We speak and act as if we were perfectly free in the pure and virgin moment to do what we will with ourselves in an absolutely liberty of choice. But there is no such absolute liberty.

Certainly, the will in us has always to choose between a certain number of possibilities, for that is the way in which Nature always acts ; even our passivity, our refusal to will, is itself a choice, itself an act of the will of Nature in us ; even in the atom there is a will always at its work. The whole difference is the extent to which we associate our idea of self with the action of the will in Nature ; when we so associate ourselves, we think of it as our will and say that it is a free will and that it is we who are acting. And error or not, illusion or not, this idea of our will, of our action is not a thing of no consequence, of no utility ; everything in Nature has a consequence and an utility. It is rather that process of our conscious being by which Nature in us becomes more and more aware of and responsive to the presence of the secret Purusha within her and opens by that increase of knowledge to a greater possibility of action ; it is by the aid of the ego-idea that she raises herself to her own higher possibilities, rises out of the sheer or else the predominant passivity of the tamasic nature into the passion and the struggle of the rajasic nature and from the passion and the struggle of the rajasic Nature to the greater light, happiness and purity of the sattvic nature. The relative self-mastery gained by the natural man over himself, is the dominion gained by the higher possibilities of his nature over its lower possibilities, and this is done in him when he associates his idea of self with the struggle of the higher guna to get the mastery, the predominance over the lower guna. The sense of free will, illusion or not, is a necessary machinery of the action of Nature, necessary for man during his progress, and it would be disastrous for him to lose it before he is ready for a higher truth. If it be said, as it has been

said, that Nature deludes man to fulfil her behests and that the idea of a free individual will is the most powerful of these delusions, then it must also be said that the delusion is for his good and without it he could not rise to his full possibilities.

But it is not a sheer delusion, it is only an error of standpoint and an error of placement. The ego thinks that it is the real self and acts as if it were the true centre of action and as if all existed for its sake, and there it commits an error of standpoint and placement. It is not wrong in thinking that there is something or someone within ourselves, within this action of our nature, who is the true centre of its action and for whom all exists ; but this is not the ego, it is the Lord secret within our hearts, the divine Purusha. The self-assertion of ego-sense is the broken and distorted shadow in our minds of the truth that there is a real self within us which is the master of all and for whom and at whose behest Nature goes about her works. So too the ego's idea of free will is a distorted and misplaced sense of the truth that there is a free Self within us and that the will in Nature is only a modified and partial reflection of its will, modified and partial because it lives in the successive moments of Time and acts by a constant series of modifications which forget much of their own precedents and are only imperfectly conscious of their own consequences and aims. But the Will within, exceeding the moments of Time, knows all these and the action of Nature in us is an attempt, we might say, to work out under the difficult conditions of a natural and egoistic ignorance what is foreseen by the inner Will and Knowledge.

But a time must come in our progress when we are ready to open our eyes to the real truth of our being, and then the error of our egoistic free-will must fall away from us. The rejection of the idea of egoistic free-will does not imply a cessation of action, because Nature is

the doer and carries out her action after this machinery is dispensed with even as she did before it came into usage in the process of her evolution. In the man who has rejected it, it may even be possible for her to develop a greater action ; for his mind may be more aware of all that his nature is by the self-creation of the past, more aware of the powers that environ and are working upon it to help or to hinder its growth, more aware too of the latent greater possibilities which it contains by virtue of all in it that is unexpressed, yet capable of expression ; and this mind may be a freer channel for the sanction of the Purusha to the greater possibilities that it sees and a freer instrument for the response of Nature, for her resultant attempt at their development and realisation. But this rejection of free-will must not be a mere fatalism or idea of natural determinism in the understanding without any vision of the real Self in us ; for then the ego still remains as our sole idea of self and, as that is always the instrument of Prakriti, we still act by the ego and with our will as her instrument, and the idea in us brings no real change, but only a modification of our intellectual attitude. We shall have accepted the phenomenal truth of the determination of our egoistic being and action by Nature, we shall have seen our subjection ; but we shall not have seen the unborn self within which is above the action of the gunas ; we shall not have seen wherein lies our gate of freedom. Nature and ego are not all we are ; there is the free soul, the Purusha.

But in what consists this freedom of the Purusha? The Purusha of the current Sankhya philosophy is free in the essence of his being, but because he is the non-doer, *akartâ* ; and in so far as he permits Nature to throw on the inactive Soul her shadow of action, he becomes bound phenomenally by the actions of the gunas and cannot recover his freedom except by dissociation from her and by cessation of her activities. If then a man casts

from him the idea of himself as the doer or of the works as his, if, as the Gita enjoins, he fixes himself in the view of himself as the inactive non-doer, *âtmânâṁ akartâram*, and all action as not his own but Nature's, as the play of her gunas, will not a like result follow? The Sankhya Purusha is the giver of the sanction, but a passive sanction only, *anumati*, the work is entirely Nature's; essentially he is the witness and sustainer, not the governing and active consciousness of the universal Godhead, the Soul that sees and accepts, as a spectator accepts the representation of a play he is watching, not the Soul that both governs and watches the play planned by himself and staged in his own being. If then he withdraws the sanction, if he refuses to acknowledge the illusion of doing by which the play continues, he ceases also to be the sustainer and the action comes to a stop, since it is only for the pleasure of the witnessing conscious Soul that Nature performs it and only by his support that she can maintain it. Therefore it is evident that the Gita's conception of the relations of the Purusha and Prakriti are not the Sankhya's, since the same movement leads to a quite different result, in one case to cessation of works, in the other to a great, a selfless and desireless, a divine action. In the Sankhya Soul and Nature are two different entities, in the Gita they are two aspects, two powers of one self-existent being; the Soul is not only giver of the sanction, but lord of Nature, Ishwara, through her enjoying the play of the world, through her executing divine will and knowledge in a scheme of things supported by his sanction and existing by his immanent presence, existing in his being, governed by the law of his being and the conscious will within it. To know, to respond to, to live in the divine being and nature of this Soul is the object of withdrawing from the ego and its action. One rises then above the lower nature of the gunas to the higher divine nature.

The movement by which this ascension is determined results from the complex poise of the Soul in its relations with Nature ; it depends on the Gita's idea of the triple Purusha. The Soul that immediately informs the action, the mutations, the successive becomings of Nature, is the Kshara, that which seems to change with her changes, to move in her motion, the Person who follows in his idea of his being the changes of his personality brought about by the continuous action of her Karma. Nature here is Kshara, a constant movement and mutation in Time, a constant becoming. But this Nature is simply the executive Power of the Soul itself ; for only by what he is, can she become, only according to the possibilities of his becoming, can she act ; she works out the becoming of his being. Her Karma is determined by Swabhava, the own-nature, the law of self-becoming of the soul, even though, the agent and executive of the becoming, it seems to determine it. According to what we are, we act, and by our action we develop, we work out what we are. Nature is the action, the mutation, the becoming, and it is the Power that executes all these ; but the Soul is the conscious being from which that Power proceeds, from whose luminous stuff of consciousness she has drawn the variable consciousness that changes with her actions, from whose dynamic stuff of power or conscious will she has drawn the variable will that changes and express its changes in her actions. And this Soul is One and Many ; it is the one Life-being out of which all life is constituted and it is all these living beings ; it is the cosmic Existent and it is all this multitude of cosmic existences, *sarvabhûtâni*, for all these are One ; all the many Purushas are in their original being the one and only Purusha. But the mechanism of the ego-sense in Nature, which is part of her action, induces the mind to identify the soul's consciousness with the limited becoming of the moment, with the sum of her active consciousness in a given field of space and time,

with the result from moment to moment of the sum of her past actions. It is possible to realise in a way this unity of all these beings, in Nature herself, and become aware of a cosmic Soul, which is manifest in the whole action of cosmic Nature, Nature manifesting the Soul, the Soul constituting the Nature. But this is to become aware only of the great cosmic Becoming, which is not false or unreal, but the knowledge of which alone does not give us the true knowledge of our self, for our true self is always something more than this and something beyond it.

For, beyond the soul manifest in Nature and bound up with its action, is another status of the Purusha, which is entirely a status and not at all an action ; that is the silent, the immutable, the all-pervading, self-existent, motionless Self, *sarvagatam achalam*, immutable Being and not Becoming, the Akshara. In the kshara the Soul is involved in the action of Nature, therefore it is concentrated, loses itself, as it were, in the moments of Time, in the waves of the Becoming : in the Akshara Nature falls to silence and rest in the Soul, therefore it becomes aware of its immutable being. The Kshara is the Sankhya's Purusha when it reflects the varied workings of the gunas of Nature, and it knows itself as the Saguna, the Personal ; the Akshara is the Sankhya's Purusha when the gunas have fallen into a state of equilibrium, and it knows itself as the Nirguna, the Impersonal. Therefore while the Kshara, associating itself with the works of Prakriti, seems to be the doer of works, *kartâ*, the Akshara dissociated from all the workings of the gunas is the inactive non-doer, *akartâ*, and witness. The soul of man, when it takes the poise of the Kshara, identifies itself with the play of personality and readily clouds its self-knowledge with the ego-sense in Nature, so that he thinks of himself as the ego doer of works ; when it takes its poise in the Akshara, it identifies itself with the Impersonal and is aware of Nature as the doer and itself as the inactive wit-

nessing Self, *akartāram*. The mind of man has to tend to one of these poises, it takes them as alternatives ; it is bound by Nature to action in the mutations of quality and personality or it is free from her workings in immutable impersonality.

But these two, the status and immutability of the Soul and the action of the Soul and its mutability in Nature, actually coexist, and this would be an anomaly irreconcilable except by some such theory as that of Maya or else of a double and divided being, if there were not a supreme reality of the Soul's existence of which these are the two contrary aspects, but which is limited by neither of them. We have seen that the Gita finds this in the Purushottama. The supreme Soul is the Ishwara, God, the Master of all being, *sarva-bhāta-maheshwara*. He puts forth his own active nature, his Prakriti,—*svām prakr'itum*, says the Gita,—manifest in the Jiva, worked out by the *svābhāva*, own-becoming, of each Jiva according to the law of the divine being in it, the great lines of which each Jiva must follow, but worked out too in the egoistic nature by the bewildering play of the three *gunas* upon each other, *gunā guneshu vartante*. That is the *traigunyamayī Mâyā*, the Maya hard for man to get beyond, *duratyayā*,—yet can one get beyond it by transcending the three *gunas*. For while all this is done by the Ishwara through his Nature-Power in the Kshara, in the Akshara he is untouched, indifferent, regarding all equally, extended within all, yet above all. In all three he is the Lord, the supreme Ishwara in the highest, the presiding and all-pervading Impersonality, *prabhu* and *vibhu*, in the Akshara, and the immanent Will and active Lord in the Kshara. He is free in his impersonality even while working out the play of his personality ; he is not either merely impersonal or personal, but one and the same being in two aspects ; he is the impersonal-personal, *nirguno gunī*, of the Upanishad. By him all has

been willed even before it is worked out,—as he says of the still living Dhartrarashtrians, "already have they been slain by Me" *mayi nihatâh pūrvam eva*,—and the working out by Nature is only the result of his Will ; yet by virtue of his impersonality behind he is not bound by his works, *kartâram akartâram*.

But man as the individual self, owing to his ignorant self-identification with the work and the becoming, as if that were all his soul and not a power of his soul, a power proceeding from it, is bewildered by the ego-sense. He thinks that it is he and others who are doing all ; he does not see that Nature is doing all and that he is misrepresenting and disfiguring her works to himself by ignorance and attachment. He is enslaved by the gunas, now hampered in the dull case of tamas, now blown by the strong winds of rajas, now limited by the partial lights of sattwa, not distinguishing himself at all from the nature-mind which alone is thus modified by the gunas. He is therefore mastered by pain and pleasure, happiness and grief, desire and passion, attachment and disgust ; he has no freedom.

He must, to be free, get back from the Nature action to the status of the Akshara ; he will then be *triguṇâtīta*, beyond the gunas. Knowing himself as the Akshara Brahman, the unchanging Purusha, he will know himself as an immutable impersonal self, the Atman, tranquilly observing and impartially supporting the action, but himself calm, indifferent, untouched, motionless, pure, one with all beings in their self, not one with Nature and her workings. This Self, though by its presence authorizing the works of Nature, though by its pervading being supporting and consenting to them, *prabhu vibhu*, does not itself create works or the state of the doer or the joining of the works to their fruit, *na kartr'itvam na karmâni sr'ijati na karma-phala-sanyogam*, but only watches nature in the Kshara working out these things, *svabhâvas tu pravartate* ; it accepts neither the sin nor the virtue of the living

creatures born into this Birth, *jantarah*, as his own, *nâdatte kasyachit pāpam na chairā sukr'itam*. It is the ego bewildered by ignorance which attributes these things to itself, because it assumes the responsibility of the doer and chooses to figure as that and not as an instrument of a greater power, which is all that it really is ; *ajñān-nâvr'itam jñānam tena muhyanti jantarah*. By getting back into the impersonal self the soul gets back into a greater self-knowledge and is liberated from the bondage of the works of Nature, untouched by her gunas, free from her shows of good and evil, suffering and happiness. The natural being, the mind, body, life, still remain, Nature still works ; but he does not identify himself with these, nor while the gunas play in the natural being, does he rejoice or grieve. He is the calm and free immutable Self observing all.

Is this the last state, the utmost possibility, the highest secret ? It cannot be, since this is a mixed or divided, not a perfectly harmonised status, a double, not a unified being, a freedom in the soul, an imperfection in the nature. It can only be a stage. What then is there beyond it ? One solution is that of the Sannyasin who rejects the action altogether, so far at least as action can be rejected ; but this solution, though admitted, is not preferred by the Gita. The Gita also insists on the giving up of actions, *sarvākarmāni sannyasya*, but inwardly to the Brahman. Brahman in the Kshara supports the action of Prakriti, Brahman in the Akshara dissociates itself from the action, preserves its freedom ; the individual soul unified with the Brahman in the Akshara is free and dissociated, unified with the Brahman in the Kshara supports, but is not affected. This it can do best when it sees that both are aspects of the one Purushottama. The Purushottama, inhabiting all existences as the secret Ishwara, controls the Nature and by his will, now no longer distorted and disfigured by the ego-sense, the Nature works out the

actions by the swabhava ; the individual soul makes his divinised natural being the instrument of the divine will, *nimitta-mâtram*. He remains even in action *tri'gunâñña*, beyond the gunas, free from the gunas, *nistraigunya*, fulfilling entirely at last the early injunction of the Gita, *nistraigunyo bhavârajuna*. He is indeed still the enjoyer of the gunas, as is the Brahman, *nirgunam gunabhoktri cha*, unattached, yet all-supporting, even as is that Brahman, *asaktam sarvabhūit* : but the action of the gunas within him is quite changed ; it is lifted above their egoistic character and reactions. For he has unified his whole being in the Purushottama, has assumed the divine being and the higher divine nature of becoming, *madbhāva*, has unified even his mind and natural consciousness with the Divine, *manmanā machchittah*. This change is the final evolution of the nature and the consummation of the divine birth, *rahasyam uttamam*.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XLII

THE MOTIVES OF DEVOTION

All religion begins with the conception of some Power or existence greater and higher than our limited and mortal selves, a thought and act of worship done to that Power, and an obedience offered to its will, its laws or its demands. But Religion, in its beginnings, sets an immeasurable gulf between the Power thus conceived, worshipped and obeyed and the worshipper. Yoga in its culmination abolishes the gulf; for Yoga is union. We arrive at union with it through knowledge; for as our first obscure conceptions of it clarify, enlarge, deepen, we come to recognise it as our own highest self, the origin and sustainer of our being and that towards which it tends. We arrive at union with it through works; for from simply obeying we come to identify our will with its Will, since only in proportion as it is identified with this Power that is its source and ideal, can our will become perfect and divine. We arrive at union with it also by worship; for the thought and act of a distant worship develops into the necessity of close adoration and this into the intimacy of love, and the consummation of love is union with the Beloved. It is from this development

of worship that the Yoga of devotion starts and it is by this union with the Beloved that it finds its highest point and consummation.

All our instincts and the movements of our being begin by supporting themselves on the ordinary motives of our lower human nature,—mixed and egoistic motives at first, but afterwards they purify and elevate themselves, they become an intense and special need of our higher nature quite apart from the results our actions bring with them; finally they exalt themselves into a sort of categorical imperative of our being, and it is through our obedience to this that we arrive at that supreme something self-existent in us which was all the time drawing us towards it, first by the lures of our egoistic nature, then by something much higher, larger, more universal, until we are able to feel its own direct attraction which is the strongest and most imperative of all. In the transformation of ordinary religious worship into the Yoga of pure Bhakti we see this development from the motivated and interested worship of popular religion into a principle of motiveless and self-existent love. This last is in fact the touchstone of the real Bhakti and shows whether we are really in the central way or are only upon one of the bypaths leading to it. We have to throw away the props of our weakness, the motives of the ego, the lures of our lower nature before we can deserve the divine union.

Faced with the sense of a Power or perhaps a number of Powers greater and higher than himself by whom his life in Nature is overshadowed, influenced, governed, man naturally applies to it or to them the first primitive feelings of the natural being among the difficulties, desires and dangers of that life,—fear and interest. The enormous part played by these motives in the evolution of the religious instinct, is undeniable, and in fact, man being what he is, it could hardly have been less; and even when religion has advanced fairly far on its road, we see these

motives still surviving, active, playing a sufficiently large part, justified and appealed to by Religion herself in support of her claims on man. The fear of God, it is said,—or, it may be added for the sake of historical truth, the fear of the Gods,—is the beginning of religion, a half-truth upon which scientific research, trying to trace the evolution of religion, ordinarily in a critical and often a hostile rather than in a sympathetic spirit, has laid undue emphasis. But not the fear of God only, for man does not act, even most primitively, from fear alone, but from twin motives, fear and desire, fear of things unpleasant and maleficent and desire of things pleasant and beneficent,—therefore from fear and interest. Life to him is primarily and engrossingly,—until he learns to live more in his soul and only secondarily in the action and reaction of outward things,—a series of actions and results, things to be desired, pursued and gained by action and things to be dreaded and shunned, yet which may come upon him as a result of action. And it is not only by his own action but by that also of others and of Nature around him that these things come to him. As soon, then, as he comes to sense a Power behind all this which can influence or determine action and result, he conceives of it as a dispenser of boons and sufferings, able and under certain conditions willing to help him or hurt, save and destroy.

In the most primitive parts of his being he conceives of it as a thing of natural egoistic impulses like himself, beneficent when pleased, maleficent when offended ; worship is then a means of propitiation by gifts and a supplication by prayer. He gets God on his side by praying to him and flattering him. With a more advanced mentality, he conceives of the action of life as reposing on a certain principle of divine justice, which he reads always according to his own ideas and character, as a sort of enlarged copy of his human justice ; he conceives the idea of moral good and evil and looks upon suffering and calamity and

all things unpleasant as a punishment for his sins and upon happiness and good fortune and all things pleasant as a reward of his virtue. God appears to him as a king, judge, legislator, executor of justice. But still regarding him as a sort of magnified Man, he imagines that as his own justice can be deflected by prayers and propitiation, so the divine justice can also be deflected by the same means. Justice is to him reward and punishment, and the justice of punishment can be modified by mercy to the suppliant, while rewards can be supplemented by special favours and kindness such as Power when pleased can always bestow on its adherents and worshippers. Moreover God like ourselves is capable of wrath and revenge, and wrath and revenge can be turned by gifts and supplication and atonement ; he is capable too of partiality, and his partiality can be attracted by gifts, by prayer and by praise. Therefore instead of relying solely on the observation of the moral law, worship as prayer and propitiation is still continued.

Along with these motives there arises another development of personal feeling, first of the awe which one naturally feels for something vast, powerful and incalculable beyond our nature by a certain inscrutability in the springs and extent of its action, and of the veneration and adoration which one feels for that which is higher in its nature or its perfection than ourselves. For, even while preserving largely the idea of a God endowed with the qualities of human nature, there still grows up along with it, mixed up with it or superadded, the conception of an omniscience, an omnipotence and a mysterious perfection quite other than our nature. A confused mixture of all these motives, variously developed, often modified, subtilised or glossed over, is what constitutes nine tenths of popular religion ; the other tenth is a suffusion of the rest by the percolation into it of nobler, more beautiful and profounder ideas of the Divine which minds of a greater

spirituality have been able to bring into the more primitive religious concepts of mankind. The result is usually crude enough and a ready target for the shafts of scepticism and unbelief,—powers of the human mind which have their utility even for faith and religion, since they compel a religion to purify gradually what is crude or false in its conceptions. But what we have to see is how far in purifying and elevating the religious instinct of worship any of these earlier motives need to survive and enter into the Yoga of devotion which itself starts from worship. That depends on how far they correspond to any truth of the divine Being and its relations with the human soul ; for we seek by Bhakti union with the Divine and true relation with it, with its truth and not with any mirage of our lower nature and of its egoistic impulses and ignorant conceptions.

The ground on which sceptical unbelief assails Religion, namely, that there is in fact no conscient Power or Being in the universe greater and higher than ourselves or in any way influencing or controlling our existence, is one which Yoga cannot accept, as that would contradict all spiritual experience and make Yoga itself impossible. Yoga is not a matter of theory or dogma, like philosophy or popular religion, but a matter of experience. Its experience is that of a conscient universal and supracosmic Being with whom it brings us into union, and this conscious experience of union with the Invisible, always renewable and verifiable, is as valid as our conscious experience of a physical world and of visible bodies with whose invisible minds we daily communicate. Yoga proceeds by conscious union, the conscious being is its instrument, and a conscious union with the Inconscient cannot be. It is true that it goes beyond the human consciousness and in Samadhi becomes superconscient, but this is not an annihilation of our conscious being, it is only its self-exceeding, the going beyond its present level

and normal limits.

So far, then, all Yogic experience is agreed. But Religion and the Yoga of Bhakti go farther ; they attribute to this Being a Personality and human relations with the human being. In both the human being approaches the Divine by means of his humanity, with human emotions, as he would approach a fellow-being, but with more intense and exalted feelings ; and not only so, but the Divine also responds in a manner answering to these emotions. In that possibility of response lies the whole question ; for if the Divine is impersonal, featureless and relationless, no such response is possible and all human approach to it becomes an absurdity ; we must rather dehumanise, depersonalise, annul ourselves in so far as we are human beings or any kind of beings ; on no other conditions and by no other means can we approach it. Love, fear, prayer, praise, worship of an Impersonality which has no relation with us or with anything in the universe and no feature that our minds can lay hold of, are obviously an irrational foolishness. On such terms religion and devotion become out of the question. The Advaitin in order to find a religious basis for his bare and sterile philosophy, has to admit the practical existence of God and the gods and to delude his mind with the language of Maya. Buddhism only became a popular religion when Buddha had taken the place of the supreme Deity as an object of worship.

Even if the Supreme be capable of relations with us but only of impersonal relations, religion is robbed of its human vitality and the Path of Devotion ceases to be effective or even possible. We may indeed apply our human emotions to it, but in a vague and imprecise fashion, with no hope of a human response : the only way in which it can respond to us, is by stilling our emotions and throwing upon us its own impersonal calm and immutable equality ; and this is what in fact happens when we ap-

proach the pure impersonality of the Godhead. We can obey it as a Law, lift our souls to it in aspiration towards its tranquil being, grow into it by shedding from us our emotional nature ; the human being in us is not satisfied, but it is quieted, balanced, stilled. But the Yoga of devotion, agreeing in this with Religion, insists on a closer and warmer worship than this impersonal aspiration. It aims at a divine fulfilment of the humanity in us as well as of the impersonal part of our being ; it aims at a divine satisfaction of the emotional being of man. It demands of the Supreme acceptance of our love and a response in kind ; as we delight in Him and seek Him, so it believes that He too delights in us and seeks us. Nor can this demand be condemned as irrational, for if the supreme and universal Being did not take any delight in us, it is not easy to see how we could have come into being or could remain in being, and if He does not at all draw us towards him,—a divine seeking of us,—there would seem to be no reason in Nature why we should turn from the round of our normal existence to seek Him.

Therefore that there may be at all any possibility of a Yoga of devotion, we must assume first that the supreme Existence is not an abstraction or a state of existence, but a conscious Being ; secondly, that he meets us in the universe and is in some way immanent in it as well as its source,—otherwise, we should have to go out of cosmic life to meet him ; thirdly, that he is capable of personal relations with us and must therefore be not incapable of personality ; finally, that when we approach him by our human emotions, we receive a response in kind. This does not mean that the nature of the Divine is precisely the same as our human nature though upon a larger scale, or that it is that nature pure of certain perversions and God a magnified or else an ideal Man. God is not and cannot be an ego limited by his qualities as we are in our normal consciousness. But on the other hand our human conscious-

ness must certainly originate and have been derived from the Divine ; though the forms which it takes in us may and must be other than the divine because we are limited by ego, not universal, not superior to our nature, not greater than our qualities and their workings, as he is, still our human emotions and impulses must have behind them a Truth in him of which they are the limited and very often, therefore, the perverse or even the degraded forms. By approaching him through our emotional being we approach that Truth, it comes down to us to meet our emotions and lift them towards it ; through it our emotional being is united with him.

Secondly, this supreme Being is also the universal Being and our relations with the universe are all means by which we are prepared for entering into relation with him. All the emotions with which we confront the action of the universal existence upon us, are really directed towards him, in ignorance at first, but it is by directing them in growing knowledge towards him that we enter into more intimate relations with him, and all that is false and ignorant in them will fall away as we draw nearer towards unity. To all of them he answers, taking us in the stage of progress in which we are ; for if we met no kind of response or help to our imperfect approach, the more perfect relations could never be established. Even as men approach him, so he accepts them and responds too by the divine Love to their *bhakti, tathaiva bhayate*. Whatever form of being, whatever qualities they lend to him, through that form and those qualities he helps them to develop, encourages or governs their advance and in their straight way or their crooked draws them towards him. What they see of him is a truth, but a truth represented to them in the terms of their own being and consciousness, partially, distortedly, not in the terms of its own higher reality, not in the aspect which it assumes when we become aware of the complete Divinity. This

is the justification of the cruder and more primitive elements of religion and also their sentence of transience and passing. They are justified because there is a truth of the Divine behind them and only so could that truth of the Divine be approached in that stage of the developing human consciousness and be helped forward ; they are condemned, because to persist always in these crude conceptions and relations with the Divine is to miss that closer union towards which these crude beginnings are the first steps, however faltering.

All life, we have said, is a Yoga of Nature ; here in this material world life is her reaching out from her first inconscience towards a return to union with the conscient Divine from whom she proceeded. In religion the mind of man, her accomplished instrument, becomes aware of her goal in him, responds to her aspiration. Even popular religion is a sort of ignorant Yoga of devotion. But it does not become what we specifically call Yoga until the motive becomes in a certain degree clairvoyant, until it sees that union is its object and that love is the principle of union, and until therefore it tries to realise love and lose its separative character in love. When that has been accomplished, then the Yoga has taken its decisive step and is sure of its fruition. Thus the motives of devotion have first to direct themselves engrossingly and predominantly towards the Divine, then to transform themselves so that they are rid of their more earthy elements and finally to take their stand in pure and perfect love. All those that cannot coexist with the perfect union of love, must eventually fall away, while only those that can form themselves into expressions of divine love and into means of enjoying divine love, can remain. For love is the one emotion in us which can be entirely motiveless and self-existent ; love need have no other motive than love. For all our emotions arise either from the seeking after delight and the possession of it, or from the baffling of the search,

or from the failure of the delight we have possessed or had thought to grasp ; but love is that by which we can enter directly into possession of the self-existent delight of the divine Being. Divine love is indeed itself that possession and, as it were, the body of the Ananda.

These are the truths which condition our approach to this Yoga and our journey on this path. There are subsidiary questions which arise and trouble the intellect of man, but, though we may have yet to deal with them they are not essential. Yoga of Bhakti is a matter of the heart and not of the intellect. For even for the knowledge which comes on this way, we set out from the heart and not from the intelligence. The truth of the motives of the heart's devotion and their final arrival and in some sort their disappearance into the supreme and unique self-existent motive of love, is therefore all that initially and essentially concerns us. Such difficult questions there are as whether the Divine has an original supraphysical form or power of form from which all forms proceed or is eternally formless ; all we need at present say is that the Divine does at least accept the various forms which the devotee gives to him and through them meets him in love, while the mixing of our spirits with his spirit is essential to the fruition of Bhakti. So too, certain religions and religious philosophies seek to bind down devotion by a conception of an eternal difference between the human soul and the Divine, without which they say love and devotion cannot exist, while that philosophy which considers that One alone exists, consigns love and devotion to a movement in the ignorance, necessary perhaps or at the least useful as a preparatory movement while yet the ignorance lasts, but impossible when all difference is abolished and therefore to be transcended and discarded. We may hold, however, the truth of the one existence in this sense that all in Nature is the Divine even though God be more than all in Nature, and love becomes then a movement by

which the Divine in Nature and man takes possession of and enjoys the delight of the universal and the supreme Divine. In any case, love has necessarily a twofold fulfilment by its very nature, that by which the lover and the beloved enjoy their union in difference and all too that enhances the joy of various union, and that by which they throw themselves into each other and become one Self. That truth is quite sufficient to start with, for it is the very nature of love, and since love is the essential motive of this Yoga, as is the whole nature of love, so will be too the crown and fulfilment of the movement of the Yoga.

The Psychology of Social Development

XXII

Our normal conduct of life, whether the individual or the social, is actually governed by the balance between two powers, first an implicit will central to the life and inherent in the main power of its action, secondly, whatever modifying will can come in by the Idea in mind,—for man is a mental being,—to give this force a conscious orientation and a conscious method. Life normally finds its own centre in the vital and physical being, its cravings and its needs, its demand for persistence, growth and enjoyment, and its first self-direction and ordering of method are instinctive, entirely or very largely subconscious and magnificently automatic. The ease, splendour, fine normality, beauty, self-satisfaction of the subhuman life of Nature up to the animal is due to its entire obedience to this instinctive and automatic urge. It is a vague sense of this truth and of the very different and in this respect inferior character of human life which makes the thinker, when dissatisfied with our present conditions, speak of a life according to Nature as the remedy. It is an attempt to find such a rule in the essential nature of man which has inspired revolutionary conceptions of ethics and society and individual self-development like the vital philosophy

of Nietzsche. The common defect of these conceptions is to miss the true character of man and of his true law of being, his dharma.

Nietzsche's idea that to develop the superman out of our present very unsatisfactory manhood is our real business, is in itself an absolutely sound idea. His formula of our aim, "to become ourselves," implying, as it does, that man has not yet found all his true self, his true nature by which he can successfully and spontaneously live, could not be bettered. But then the question of questions is there, what is our self, and what is our real nature? What is that which is growing in us, but into which we have not yet grown? It is something divine, is the answer, a divinity Olympian, Apollinian, Dionysiac, which the reasoning and consciously willing animal, man, is labouring more or less obscurely to become. Certainly, it is all that; but in what shall we find the seed of that divinity and what is the poise in which the superman, once self-found, can abide and be secure from lapse into this lower and imperfect manhood? Is it the intellect and will, the double-aspected *buddhi* of the Indian psychological system? But this is at present a thing so perplexed, so divided against itself, so uncertain of everything it gains, up to a certain point indeed magically creative and efficient, but when all has been said and done, in the end so splendidly futile, so at war with and yet so dependent upon and subservient to our lower nature, that even if in it there lies concealed some seed of the entire divinity, it can hardly itself be the seed and at any rate gives us no such secure and divine poise as we are seeking. Therefore we say, not the intellect and will, but that supreme thing in us yet higher than the *buddhi*, the spirit which lies concealed in the coatings of our lower nature, is the secret seed of the divinity and will be, when discovered and delivered, the ground upon which a divine life of the human being can be with deep security founded.

When we speak of the superman, we speak evidently of something abnormal to our present nature, so much so that the very idea of it becomes easily alarming and repugnant to our normal humanity, which does not desire to be called out from its constant mechanical round to scale what may seem to it impossible heights, and loves still less the prospect of being exceeded, left behind and dominated,—though the object of a true supermanhood is not exceeding and domination for its own sake but precisely the raising of our normal humanity. But mark that this thing which we have called normal humanity, is itself something abnormal in Nature, something the like and parity of which we look around in vain to discover ; it is a rapid freak, a sudden miracle. Abnormality in Nature is no objection, no necessary sign of imperfection, but may well be an effort at a much greater perfection ; but this perfection is not found until the abnormal can find its own secure normality. But man is an abnormal who has not found his own normality,—he may imagine he has, he may appear to be normal in his own kind, but that normality is only a sort of provisional order ; therefore though man is infinitely greater than the plant or the animal, he is not perfect in his own nature like the plant and the animal. This imperfection is not a thing to be at all deplored, but rather a privilege and a promise, for it opens out to us an immense vista of self-development and self-exceeding. Man at his highest is a half-god who has risen up out of the animal Nature and is splendidly abnormal in it, but the thing which he has started out to be, the whole god, is something so much greater than what he is that it seems to him as abnormal to himself as he is to the animal. This means a great and arduous labour of growth before him, but also a splendid crown of his race and his victory.

What precisely is the defect from which all his imperfection springs ? We have already indicated it,—that has

indeed been the general aim of the preceding chapters,—but it is necessary to state it now more succinctly and precisely. We see that at first sight man seems to be a double nature, an animal nature of the vital and physical being which lives according to its instinct, its automatic orientation and method and with that a half-divine nature of the self-conscious intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, intelligently emotional, intelligently dynamic being who is capable of finding and understanding the law of his own action and consciously using and bettering it, a reflecting mind that understands Nature, a will that uses, elevates, perfects Nature, a sense that intelligently enjoys Nature. The aim of the animal part of us is to increase vital possession and enjoyment ; the aim of the semi-divine part of us is also to grow, possess and enjoy, but first to possess and enjoy intelligently, aesthetically, ethically, by the powers of the mind much more than by the powers of the life and body, and, secondly, to possess and enjoy, not so much the vital and physical except in so far as that is necessary as a foundation and starting-point, a preliminary necessity or condition, but things intellectual, ethical and aesthetic, and to grow not so much in the outward life, except in so far as that is necessary to the security, ease and dignity of our human existence, but in the true, the good and the beautiful.

This means that man has developed a new power of being,—let us call it a new soul-power, with the premiss that we regard the life and the body also as a soul-power,—and the being who has done that is under an inherent obligation not only to look at the world and revalue all in it from this new elevation, but to compel his whole being to obey this power and in a way reshape itself in its mould, and even to reshape, so far as he can, his environmental life into some image of its truth and law. In doing this lies his *swadharma*, his natural rule, the way of his perfection and his real happiness. Failing in this,

he fails in the aim of his nature and his being, and has to begin again until he finds the right path and arrives at a successful turning-point, a decisive crisis of transformation. Now this is precisely what man has failed to do. He has effected something, he has passed a certain stage of his journey. He has laid some yoke of the intellectual, ethical, aesthetical rule on his vital and physical being and made it impossible for himself to be content with or really to be the mere human animal. But more he has not been able to do successfully. The transformation of his life into the image of the true, the good and the beautiful seems as far off as ever ; if ever he comes near to some imperfect form of it,—and even then it is only done by a class or by a number of individuals with some reflex action on the life of the mass,—he slides back from it in a general decay of his life, or else stumbles on from it into some bewildering upheaval out of which he comes with new gains indeed but also with serious losses. He has never arrived at any great turning-point, any decisive crisis of transformation.

The main failure, the root of the whole failure indeed, is that he has not been able to shift what we have called the implicit will central to his life and inherent in its main power of action. His central will of life is still situated in his vital and physical being, its drift is towards vital and physical enjoyment, enlightened indeed and checked to a certain extent in its impulses by the higher powers, but enlightened only and very partially, not transformed, checked, not dominated and uplifted to a higher plane. The higher life is still only a thing superimposed on the lower, interfering with it, scolding, discouraging, lecturing, manipulating it, without being able to transform it, without indeed itself quite knowing where all this effort and uneasy struggle is meant to lead us,—sometimes, it thinks, to a quite tolerable human life on earth, the norm of which it can never successfully fix, and sometimes it

thinks it will be to another world whither by a religious life or else an edifying death it will escape out of all this potter and trouble of mortal being. Therefore these two elements live together in a continual, a mutual perplexity, made perpetually uneasy, uncomfortable and ineffectual by each other, somewhat like an ill-assorted wife and husband, always at odds and yet half in love with or at least necessary to each other, unable to beat out a harmony, yet condemned to be joined in an unhappy leash until death separates them. All the uneasiness, dissatisfaction, disillusionment, weariness, melancholy, pessimism of the human mind comes from man's practical failure to solve the riddle and the difficulty of his double nature.

We have said that this failure is due to the fact that this higher power is only a mediator, and that thoroughly to transform the vital and physical life in its image is perhaps not possible, but at any rate not the intention of Nature in us. It may be said perhaps that after all individuals have succeeded in effecting some figure of transmutation, have led entirely ethical or artistic or intellectual lives, even shaped their life by some ideal of the true, the good and the beautiful, and whatever the individual has done, the race too may and should eventually succeed in doing; for the exceptional individual is the future type, the forerunner. Yes, but to how much did their success really amount? Either they impoverished the vital and physical life in them in order to give play to one element of their being, lived a onesided and limited existence, or else they arrived at a compromise by which, while the higher life was given great prominence, the lower was still allowed to graze in its own field under the eye more or less strict or the curb more or less indulgent of the higher power or powers: in itself, in its own instincts and demands it remained unchanged. There was a dominance, but not a transformation.

Life, indeed, cannot be entirely rational, cannot con-

form entirely to the ethical or the aesthetic or the scientific and philosophical mentality. All appearances of its doing so are always to a certain extent a *trompe l'oeil*, an intellectual, aesthetic or ethical illusion. Dominated, repressed it may be, but it reserves its right ; and though individuals or a class may establish this domination for a time and impose some simulacrum of it upon the society, Life in the end circumvents the intelligence ; it gets strong elements in it,—for always there are traitor elements at work,—to come over to its side and reestablishes its instincts, recovers its field ; or if it fails in this, it has its revenge in its own decay which brings about the decay of the society. So much so, that there are times when mankind perceives this fact and, renouncing the attempt to dominate the life-instinct, determines to use the intelligence for its service and to give it light in its own field instead of enslaving it to a higher, but chimerical ideal.

Such a period was the recent materialistic age, when the intellect of man seemed decided to study thoroughly Life and Matter, to admit only that, to recognise mind only as an instrument of Life and Matter, and to devote all its knowledge to a tremendous expansion of the vital and physical life, its practicality, its efficiency, its comfort and the splendid ordering of its instincts of production, possession and enjoyment. That was the character of the materialistic, commercial, economic age of mankind, a period in which the ethical mind persisted painfully, but with decreasing self-confidence, an increasing self-questioning and a tendency to yield up the fortress of the moral law to the life-instinct, the aesthetic flourished as a rather glaring exotic ornament, a sort of rare orchid in the button-hole of the vital man, and reason became the magnificent servant of Life and Matter. The titanic development of the vital Life which followed, is ending as the Titans always end ; it has lit its own funeral pyre in the conflagration of a world-war, its natural upshot, a struggle

between the most "efficient" and "civilised" nations for the possession and enjoyment of the world, of its wealth, its markets, its available spaces, an inflated and plethoric commercial expansion, largeness of imperial size and rule. For that is what the war has been in its real origin, because that was the secret or the open intention of all pre-war diplomacy and international politics; and if a nobler idea has awakened, it has been only under the scourge of Death and before the terrifying spectre of mutual destruction. Even now the awakening is by no means complete, nor everywhere quite sincere, but it is there and it is struggling towards birth even in Germany, the great protagonist of the vitalistic philosophy of life. In that awakening lies some hope of better things.

Its first result seems likely to be a return to an older ideal, with a will to use the reason and the ethical mind better and more largely in the ordering of individual, of national and of international life. And such an attempt may well be a necessary stage towards the real solution. But if it ends there, we shall not arrive. The solution lies, we have said, in an awakening to our real, because our highest self and nature,—that self which we are not yet, but have to become and which is not the strong and enlightened vital Will hymned by Nietzsche, but a spiritual self and spiritual nature using the mental being which we already are, but the mental being spiritualised, and transforming by a spiritual ideality the aim and action of our vital and physical being; for this is the formula of man in his highest potentiality, and safety lies in tending towards our highest and not in resting content with an inferior potentiality. To follow after the highest thing in us may seem to be to live dangerously, to use again one of Nietzsche's inspired expressions, but by that danger comes victory and security; to rest in or follow after an inferior potentiality may seem safe, rational, comfortable, easy, but it ends badly, in some futility or in a mere circling, down the abyss or in a

stagnant morass. Our right and natural road is towards the summits.

We have then to return to the pursuit of an ancient secret which man, as a race, has seen only obscurely and followed after lamely, but in following which, nevertheless, lies his social no less than his individual salvation,—the kingdom of God, the reign of the Spirit over mind and life and body. It is because they have never quite lost hold of this secret that the older Asiatic nations have survived so persistently ; they have fallen asleep, but they have not perished. It is true that they have for a time failed in life, while the European nations trusting to the flesh and the intellect have succeeded in life, but that success has always turned into a catastrophe. Still Asia has failed in life, it has fallen in the dust, and even if the dust in which it is lying is sacred, as the modern poet of Asia has declared,—though the sacredness may be doubted,—still the dust is not the proper place for man, nor is to lie prostrate in it his right human attitude. Asia has not failed because she has followed after things spiritual, as some console themselves by saying,—as if the spirit could be at all a thing of weakness or a cause of weakness,—but because she has not followed after it sufficiently, has not learned how entirely to make it the master of life, but has either made a gulf and a division between life and the Spirit or else has rested in a compromise between them and accepted as final socio-religious systems founded upon that compromise. So to rest is perilous ; for the call of the Spirit more than any other demands that we shall follow it always to the end, and the end is neither a divorce and departure nor a compromise, but a conquest of all by the spirit and that reign of the seekers after perfection which, in the Hindu religious symbol, the last Avatar comes to accomplish.

This truth it is important to note, for mistakes made on the path are often even more instructive than the mistakes

made by a turning aside from the path. As it is possible to superimpose the intellectual, ethical or aesthetic life or the sum of their motives upon the vital and physical, to be satisfied with a partial domination or a compromise, so it is possible to superimpose the spiritual life or some figure of strength or ascendancy of spiritual ideas and motives on the mental, vital and physical life and either to impoverish the latter, to impoverish the vital and physical existence and even to depress the mental as well in order to give the spiritual an easier domination, or else to make a compromise and leave the lower being its pasture on condition of doing frequent homage to the spiritual, admitting to a certain extent, greater or less, its influence and formally acknowledging it as the last state and the finality of the human being. This is the most that human society has ever done in the past, and though necessarily that must be a stage of the journey, to rest there is to miss the heart of the matter, the one thing needful. Not a humanity leading its ordinary life, what is now its normal round, touched by spiritual influences, but a humanity aspiring wholeheartedly to a law that is now abnormal to it until its whole life has been elevated into spirituality, is the steep way that lies before man towards his perfection and the transformation that has to be made.

The secret of the transformation lies in the transference of our centre of living and in a change of our main power of living. The central will implicit in life must be no longer the vital will in the life and the body, but the spiritual will which is now only disclosed to us weakened and disguised in the mental Idea, but which is in its own nature supramental and the supramental power and truth of which we have somehow to discover. The main power of our living must not be the vital urge of Nature which is already accomplished in us and can only whirl upon its rounds about the ego-centre, but the spiritual power which is secret in us and waits for our transcendence of

the ego and the discovery of the true individual in whose universality we shall be united with all others. To transfer from the vital being, the instrumental reality in us, to the spirit, the central reality, our will to be and our power of living is the eternal secret for which our nature is seeking. All that we have done hitherto is some attempt to transfer this will and power to the mental idea in us, to live in the mental being and in the strength of the idea. But the mental idea in us is always intermediary and instrumental ; it depends on always and aims always at something other than itself and therefore though, being a power in itself, it can follow after its own separate satisfaction, it cannot rest always satisfied with that alone. It must either gravitate downwards and outwards towards the vital and physical life or it must elevate itself inwards and upwards towards the spirit.

And that must be why in thought, in art, in conduct, in life we are always divided between two tendencies, one idealistic, the other realistic. The latter very easily seems to us more real, more solidly founded, more in touch with actualities because it relies upon a reality which is patent, sensible and already accomplished ; the idealistic easily seems to us something unreal, fantastic, unsubstantial, nebulous, a thing more of thoughts and words than of live actualities, because it is trying to embody a reality not yet accomplished. To a certain extent we are perhaps right ; for the ideal, a stranger among the actualities of our physical life, is in fact a thing unreal until it has either in some way reconciled itself to the imperfections of our outer life or else found the greater and purer reality for which it is seeking and imposed it on our outer activities ; till then it hangs between two worlds and has conquered neither of them. Submission to the actual by a compromise is easy ; discovery of the spiritual truth and the transformation of our actual way of living is difficult ; but it is precisely this difficult thing which has to be done, if man

is to find and fulfil his true nature. Our idealism is always the most rightly human thing in us, but it has to convert itself into a spiritual realism which shall lay its hands on the higher reality of the spirit and take up for it this lower reality of our sensational, vital and physical being.

This upward transference of our will to be and our power of life we have, then, to make as the very principle of our perfection. That will and that power must choose between the domination of the vital part in us and the domination of the spirit. Nature can rest in the round of vital being, can produce there a sort of perfection, but that is the perfection of an arrested development satisfied with its own limits. This she can manage in the plant and the animal, because the life and the body are in these at once the instrument and their own aim ; they do not look beyond themselves. She cannot do it in man because here she has shot up beyond her physical and vital basis, she has developed in him the mind which is an outflowering of the life towards the light of the Spirit, and the life and the body are now instrumental and are no longer their own aim. Therefore the perfection of man cannot consist in pursuing the round of the physical life. Neither can it be found in the wider rounds of the mental being; for that also is instrumental and tends towards something else beyond it, whose power indeed works in it, but whose larger truth is super-conscious to its present intelligence, supramental. The perfection of man lies in the unfolding of the ever-perfect Spirit.

The lower perfection of Nature in the plant and the animal comes from an instinctive, an automatic, sub-conscious obedience in each to the vital truth of its own being. The higher perfection of the spiritual life will come by a spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has become himself, found his own real nature ; but this spontaneity will not be instinctive and sub-conscious, but intuitive and fully,

integrally conscient. It will be a glad obedience to a spontaneous principle of spiritual, of unified and integralised truth, beauty, good, power, joy, love, unity, the object of which in life will and must be as in all life growth, possession, enjoyment, but a growth which is a manifestation, a possession and enjoyment spiritual and of the spirit in things which will use, but will not depend on the mental, vital and physical symbols of our living. Therefore it will not be a limited perfection of arrested development dependent on the repetition of the same forms and the same round of actions, any departure from which becomes a peril and a disturbance, but an illimitable perfection capable of infinite variation in its forms,—for the Spirit is infinite,—but securely the same in all variations.

Therefore too it cannot come by the mental idea dealing with the Spirit as it deals with life, the idea in mind seizing upon the central will in Spirit and trying to give this higher force a conscious orientation and method in accordance with the ideas of the intellect ; still less can it come by chaining the spirit to some fixed mental idea or system of intellectual truth, aesthetic rule, ethics, practical action, vital and physical life, to a particular arrangement of forms and actions and by declaring all departure from that a peril and a disturbance or a deviation from spiritual living. That was the mistake made in Asia and the cause of its arrested development and decline ; for it is to subject the higher to the lower and to bind down the self-disclosing Spirit to a provisional and imperfect compromise with mind. Man's true freedom and perfection will come when the spirit within bursts the forms of mind and life and turns upon them to seize and transform them into its own image.

In fact, as we have seen, the mind and the intellect are not the key. They can only trace out and revolve in a circle of half-truths and uncertainties. But in the mind and life, in all the action of the intellectual, the aesthetic, the

ethical, the dynamic and practical, the emotional, sensational, vital, physical being, there is that which sees by identity and intuition and gives to all these things such truth and such certainty and stability as they are able to compass. Obscurely we are now beginning to see something of this behind all our science and philosophy and all our other activities. But as long as it has to work for the mind and life and not for itself, to work in their forms and not by its own spontaneous light, we cannot make any great use of this discovery. Man's road to supermanhood will be open when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, are now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater power within shall be henceforward his great preoccupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life, for themselves, in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and the bringing of its power into our human existence. We shall be on the right road to become ourselves, to find our true nature, to live our true, divine existence in our real and divine being.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXXIII

The great necessity, then, and the great difficulty is to make this idea of humanity, which is already at work upon our minds and even has begun slightly to influence from above our actions, something more than an idea, however strong, to make it a central motive and its satisfaction a necessity of our psychological being, just as the family idea or the national idea has become each a psychological motive with its own need of satisfaction. And how is this to be done ? For the family idea had the advantage of growing out of a primary vital need in our being and therefore it had not the least difficulty in becoming a psychological motive and need ; for our readiest and strongest motives and psychological needs are those which grow out of our vital necessities and instincts. The clan and tribe ideas had a similar origin, less primary and compelling, and therefore looser and more dissoluble, but still they arose from the vital necessity in human nature for aggregation and the ready basis given by the growth of the family into clan or tribe. These were natural aggregations.

The nation idea on the contrary did not arise from a primary vital need, but from a secondary or even tertiary necessity which resulted not from anything inherent in our vital nature, but from circumstances, from environ-

mental evolution ; it arose not from a vital, but from a geographical and historical necessity. And we notice that as one result it had to be created most commonly by force, force of circumstances partly, no doubt, but also by physical force, by the power of the king and the conquering tribe converted into a military and dominant State or else by a reaction against force, a revolt against conquest and domination bringing cohesion to peoples who, though geographically one or even one historically and culturally, had lacked power of cohesion and been too conscious of an original heterogeneity or of local and regional and other divisions. But still the necessity was there and the nation form after many failures and false successes got into being, and the psychological motive of patriotism, a sign of the growth of a conscious national ego, arose in the form as the expression of its soul and the guarantee of its durability. For we have to recognise this clearly, that without such a soul, such a psychological force and presence within the frame, there can be no guarantee of durability. Without it, what circumstances have created, circumstances easily will destroy. It was for this reason that the ancient world failed to create nations, except on a small scale little clan and regional nations of brief duration and usually of loose structure ; it created only artificial empires which went to pieces and left chaos behind them.

What then of this international unity now in the first obscure throes of the pre-formatory state resembling a ferment of cells drawing together for amalgamation ? What is the necessity behind it ? If we look at outward things only, the necessity is much less direct, much less compelling than any that preceded it. There is here no vital necessity ; mankind can get on well enough without international unity, so far as mere living goes, not at all perfectly, rationally or ideally indeed,—but after all where is there yet any element in human life or society which is perfect, rational or ideal ? As yet at least none ; still we

get on somehow with life, because the vital man who is the dominant element in our instincts and in our actions, cares for none of these things and is quite satisfied with any just tolerable or any precariously or partly agreeable form of living, because that is all to which he is accustomed and all therefore that he feels to be necessary. The men who are not satisfied, the thinkers, the idealists are always a minority and in the end an ineffectual minority, because though always in the end they do get their way partly, their victory yet turns into a defeat ; for the vital man, being still the majority, degrades the success into a parody of their rational hope, their clear-sighted ideal or their strong counsel of perfection.

The geographical necessity does not exist, unless we consider that it has been created through the drawing closer together of the earth and its inhabitants by Science and her magical lessening of physical distances and attenuation of barriers. But whatever may happen in the future, this is as yet not sufficient ; earth is still large enough and her divisions still real enough for her to do without any formal unity. If there is any strong need, it may be described,—if such an epithet can be applied to a thing in the present and the future,—as a historical necessity, that is, a need which has arisen as the result of certain actual circumstances that have grown up in the evolution of international relations. And that need is economical, political, mechanical, likely under certain circumstances to create some tentative or preliminary framework, but not at first a psychological reality which will vivify the frame. Moreover, it is not yet sufficiently vital to be precisely a necessity ; for it amounts mainly to a need for the removal of certain perils and inconveniences, such as the constant danger of war, and at most to the strong desirability of a better international coordination. And by itself this creates only a possibility, not even a moral certainty, of a first vague sketch and loose framework of unity which may

or may not lead to something more close and real.

But there is another power than that of external circumstance which we have a right to take into consideration. For behind all the external circumstances and necessities of which we are more easily aware in Nature, there is always an internal necessity in the being, a will and a design in Nature itself which precedes the outward signals of its development and in spite of all obstacles and failures must in the long end inevitably get itself realised. Nowadays we can see this truth everywhere in Nature down to her lowest forms ; a will in the very seed of the being, not quite conscious or only partially conscious in the form itself, but there in nature, subconscious or even inconscient if you like, but still a will, a mute idea which knows beforehand the form it is going to create, is aware of a necessity other than the environmental, a necessity contained in the very being itself, and creates persistently and inevitably a form that best answers to the necessity, however we may labour to interfere with or thwart its operations.

This is true biologically, but it is also true, though in a more subtle and variable way, psychologically. Now the very nature of man is that of an individual who on one side is always emphasizing and developing his individual being to the extent of his power, but who is also driven by the Idea or Truth within him to unify himself with others of his species, to join himself to them or agglutinate them to him, to create human groups, aggregates and collectivities. And if there is an aggregate or collectivity which it is possible for him to realise but is not yet realised, we may be sure that that too in the end he will create. This will in him is not always or often quite conscient or foreseeing, it is often largely subconscious, but even then it is eventually irresistible. And if it gets into his conscious mind, as the international idea has now done, we may count on a more rapid evolution. Such a will in Nature creates

favourable external circumstances and happenings or finds them created for it, and even if they are insufficient, she will still often use them beyond their apparent power of effectivity, not minding the possibility of failure, for she knows that in the end she will succeed and every experience of failure will help to better the eventual success.

Well then, it may be said, let us trust to this inevitable will in Nature and follow out her method of operation. Let us create anyhow this framework, any framework of the aggregate,—she knows already the complete form she intends and she will work it out eventually,—by the power of the idea and our will to realise it, by help of strong force of circumstances, by pressure of all kinds, by physical force even, if need be, since that too seems still to be a part of her necessary machinery, let us create it. Let us have the body ; the soul will grow in the body ; and we need not mind if the bodily formation is artificial with at first a small or no conscious psychological reality to vivify it. That will begin to form itself as soon as the body has been formed, as the nation was at first more or less artificially formed out of incoherent elements brought together actually by the necessity of a subconscious idea, though apparently only by physical force and the force of circumstances. As a national ego formed which, identifying itself with the geographical body of the nation, developed the psychological instinct of national unity and the need of its satisfaction, so a collective human ego will develop in the international body and will evolve the psychological instinct of human unity and the need of its satisfaction. That will be the guarantee of duration. And that possibly is how the thing will happen, man being what he is ; indeed, if we cannot do better, it will so happen, since happen somehow it must, whether in the worse way or the better.

We may recapitulate here the main possibilities and powers which are shaping us towards such an end in the present world conditions. The old means of unification,

conquest by a single great power, which would reduce part of the world by force and bring the remaining nations into the condition of dependencies, protectorates and dependent allies, the whole forming the basic structure of a great final unification,—this was the character of the ancient Roman precedent,—does not now seem any longer possible. It would require a great predominance of force simultaneously by sea and land, an irresistibly superior science and organisation and with all this a constantly successful diplomacy and an invincible good fortune. If war and diplomacy are still to be the decisive factors in international politics in the future as in the past, it would be rash to predict that such a combination may not arise, and if other means fail, it must arise ; for there is nothing that can be set down as impossible in the chances of the future, and the urge in Nature always creates its own means. But at present the possibilities of the future do not seem to point in this direction. But there is on the other hand a very strong possibility of the whole earth, or at least the three continents of the eastern hemisphere being dominated by three or four great empires, largely increased in extent of dominion, spheres of influence, protectorates, and thereby exercising a preeminence which they could either maintain by agreements, avoiding all causes of conflict, or in a rivalry which would be the cause of fresh wars and changes. This would normally have been the result of the present European conflict.

But there has struck across this possibility a revived strength of the idea of nationality expressed in the novel formula of the principle of self-determination to which the great world-empires have had to do a real or a verbal homage. The idea of international unity to which this intervention of the revived force of nationality is leading, is the so-called League of Nations. Practically, however, the league of nations under present conditions or any likely to be immediately realised would still mean the control of the

earth by a few great powers, checked only by the necessity of conciliating the sympathy and support of the smaller or less powerful nations ; for on the force and influence of these few would rest practically both the decision of all important debateable questions and the chance of enforcing the decisions of the majority against any recalcitrant great Power or combination of Powers. The growth of democratic institutions would perhaps help to minimise the chances of conflict and of the abuse of power,—though that is not absolutely certain ; it would not alter this real character of the combination.

In all this there is no immediate prospect of any such form of unification as would give room for or rather necessitate a real psychological sense of unity. Such a form might evolve ; but we should have to trust for it to the chapter of accidents or at best to the already declared urge in Nature expressed in the internationalist idea. On that side there is one possibility at which we have merely hinted as a sort of off-chance, but which now seems to be very suddenly and rapidly growing into something more, the emergence of a powerful party in all the advanced countries of the world pledged to internationalism, conscious of its necessity as a first condition for their other aims and more and more determined to give it precedence and to unite internationally to bring it about. That combination of the intellectuals with Labour which has created the Socialist parties in Germany, Russia and Austria, has formed anew recently the Labour party in England and has its counterparts in most other European countries, seems to be travelling in that direction. This world-wide movement has already created the Russian revolution and made internationalism and Labour rule its two main principles ; and it may any day surprise the world by bringing about another such cataclysm in central Europe, either on the removal of the constraining pressure of war or as a consequence of its excessive pres-

sure. It is conceivable that after the great war is over, this party everywhere may draw together. By a chain of revolutions such as took place in the nineteenth century and of less violent but still rapid evolutions brought about by the pressure of their example, or even by simply growing into the majority in each country, this party might control Europe. It might create counterparts of itself in all the American republics and in Asiatic countries. It might by using the machinery of the League of Nations or, where necessary, by physical force or economic or other pressure persuade or compel all the nations into some more stringent system of international unification. A world-State or else a close confederation of democratic peoples might be created with a common governing body for all generally important affairs and the decision of principles or at least for all properly international affairs and problems, a common law of the nations and international courts to administer it and some kind of system of international police control to maintain and enforce it. In this or in any other as yet unforeseen way a sufficient formal unity might come into being.

The question then arises, how out of this purely formal unity a real psychological unity can be created and whether it can be made a living unity. For a mere formal, mechanical, administrative, political and economic union does not necessarily create a psychological unity. None of the great empires have yet succeeded in doing that, and even in the Roman where some sense of unity did come into being, it was nothing close and living which could withstand all shocks from within and without and withstand also what was more dangerous, the peril of decay and devitalisation which the diminution of the natural elements of free variation and helpful struggle would bring with it. A complete world-union would have indeed this advantage that it would have no need to fear forces from without, for no such forces would any longer exist ;

but this very absence of outer pressure might well give greater room and power to internal elements of disintegration and still more to the opportunities of decay. It might indeed for a long time foster an internal intellectual and political activity and social progress which would keep it living ; but this principle of progress would not be always secure against a natural tendency to exhaustion and stagnation which every diminution of variety and even the very satisfaction of social and economical well-being might well hasten. Disruption of unity would then be necessary to restore humanity to life. Again, while the Roman empire appealed only to the idea of Roman unity, an artificial and accidental principle, this world-State would appeal to the idea of human unity, a real and vital principle. But if the idea of unity can appeal to the human mind, so too can the idea of separative life, for both address themselves to vital instincts of his nature. What guarantee will there be that the latter will not prevail when man has once tried unity and finds perhaps that its advantages do not satisfy his whole nature ? Only the growth of some very powerful psychological factor which will make unity necessary to him, whatever other changes and manipulations might be desirable to satisfy his other needs and instincts.

The formal unification of mankind would come in upon us in the shape of a system which would be born, grow, come to its culmination. But every system by the very nature of things tends after its culmination to decay and die. To prevent the organism decaying and dying there must be such a psychological reality within as well persist and survive all changes of its body. Nations have that in a sort of collective national ego which persists through all vital changes. But this ego is not by any means self-existent and immortal ; it supports itself on certain things with which it is identified. First, there is the geographical body, the country ; secondly, the common interests of all who inhabit the same country, defence, economical

well-being and progress, political liberty, etc ; thirdly, a common name, sentiment, culture. But we have to mark that this national ego owes its life to the coalescence of the separative instinct and the instinct of unity ; for the nation feels itself one as distinguished from other nations ; it owes its vitality to interchange with them and struggle with them in all the activities of its nature. Nor are all these sufficient. There must be a sort of religion of country, a constant recognition not only of the sacredness of the physical mother, the land, but also, in however obscure a way, of the nation as a collective soul which it is the first duty and need of every man to keep alive, to defend from suppression or mortal attaint or, if suppressed, then to watch, wait and struggle for its release and rehabilitation, if sicklied over with the touch of any fatal spiritual ailment, then to labour always to heal and revivify and save alive.

The world-State will give its inhabitants the great advantages of peace, economical well-being, general security, combination for intellectual, cultural, social activity and progress. None of these are in themselves sufficient to create the thing needed. Peace and security we all desire at present, because we have them not in sufficiency ; but we must remember that man has also within him the need of combat, adventure, struggle, almost requires these for his growth and healthy living ; that instinct would be largely suppressed by a universal peace and a flat security, and it might rise up successfully against suppression. Economical well-being by itself cannot permanently satisfy, and the price paid for it might be so heavy as to diminish its appeal and value. The human instinct for liberty, individual and national, might well be a constant menace to the world-State, unless it so skilfully arranged its system as to give them sufficient free-play. A common, intellectual, cultural activity and progress may do much, but need not by themselves be sufficient to bring into being the fully

powerful psychological factor that would be required. And the collective ego created would have to rely on the instinct of unity alone ; for it would be in conflict with the separative instinct which gives the national ego half its vitality.

It does not follow that the indispensable factor could not be created, but certain psychological elements would have to be present in great strength. First, a religion of humanity much more powerful, explicit, self-conscious, universal in its appeal than the nationalist's religion of country ; secondly, the clear recognition by every man in all his thought and life of a single soul in humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul-form ; thirdly, an ascension of man beyond the principle of ego which lives by separateness,—and yet there must be no destruction of individuality, for without that man would stagnate ; fourthly, therefore, a principle and arrangement of the common life which would give free play to individual variation, interchange in diversity and the need of adventure and conquest by which the soul of man lives and grows great, and sufficient means of expressing all the resultant complex life and growth in a flexible and progressive form of human society.

The Future Poetry

THE NATIONAL EVOLUTION OF POETRY

The work of the poet depends not only on himself and his age, but on the mentality of the nation to which he belongs and the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic tradition and environment which it creates for him. It is not to be understood by this that he is or need be entirely limited by this condition or that he is to consider himself as only a voice of the national mind or bound by the past national tradition and debarred from striking out a road of his own. In nations which are returning under difficulties to a strong self-consciousness, like the Irish or the Indians at the present moment, this nationalism may be a living idea and a powerful motive. And in others which have had a vivid collective life exercising a common and intimate influence on all its individuals or in those which have cherished an acute sense of a great national culture and tradition, the more stable elements of that tradition may exert a very conscious influence on the mind of the poets, at once helping and limiting the weaker spirits, but giving to genius an exceptional power for sustained beauty of form and a satisfying perfection. But this is no essential condition for the birth of great poetry. The poet, we must always remember, creates out of himself and has the indefeasible right to follow freely the breath of the spirit within him, provided he satisfies in his work the law of poetic beauty. The external forms of his age and his nation only give him his starting-point and some of his materials and determine to some extent the room he finds for the free play of his poetic spirit.

Nor do I mean to subscribe to the theory of the man and his milieu or the dogma of the historical school of criticism which asks of us to study all the precedents, circumstances, influences, surroundings, all that created the man and his work,—as if there were not something in him apart from all these which made all the difference,—and supposes that out of this the right estimate of his poetry will arise. But not even the right historical or psychological understanding of him need arise out of this method, since we may very easily read into him and his work things which may perhaps have been there before and around him, but never really got into him. But the right poetical estimate we certainly shall not form if we bring in so much that is accidental and unessential to cloud our free and direct impression. Rather the very opposite is the true method of appreciation, to come straight to the poet and his poem for all we need essentially to know about them,—we shall get there all that we really want for any true aesthetic or poetic purpose,—and afterwards go elsewhere for any minor elucidation or else to satisfy our scientific and historical curiosity : things accidental are then much more likely to fall into their right place and the freshness of poetic appreciation to remain unobscured. But quite apart from its external and therefore unreal method, there is a truth in the historical theory of criticism which is of real help towards grasping something that is important and even essential, if not for our poetic appreciation, yet for our intellectual judgment of a poet and his work.

In poetry, as in everything else that aims at perfection, there are always two elements, the eternal and the time element. The first is what really and always matters, it is that which must determine our definitive appreciation, our absolute verdict, or rather our essential response to poetry. A soul expressing the eternal spirit of Truth and Beauty through some of the infinite variations of beauty, with the word for its instrument, that is, after all, what the poet is, and it is to a similar soul in us seeking the same spirit and responding to it that he makes his appeal. It is when we can get this response at its purest and in its most direct and heightened awakening that our faculty of poetic appreciation becomes at once surest and

most intense. It is, we may say, the impersonal enjoyer of creative beauty in us responding to the impersonal creator and interpreter of beauty in the poet ; for it is the impersonal spirit of Truth and Beauty that is seeking to express itself through his personality, and it is that which finds its own word and seems itself to create in his highest moments of inspiration. And this Impersonal is concerned with the creative idea and the motive of beauty which is seeking expression and with the attempt to find the perfect expression, the inevitable word and the rhythm that reveals. All else is subordinate, accidental, the crude material and the conditioning medium of this essential endeavour.

Still there is also the personality of the poet and the personality of the hearer, the one giving the pitch and the form of the success arrived at, while the other determines the characteristic intellectual and aesthetic judgment to which its appeal arrives. The correspondence or the dissonance between the two decides the relation between the poet and his reader, and out of that arises what is personal in our appreciation and judgment of his poetry. In this personal or time element there is always much that is merely accidental and often rather limits and deflects our judgment than helps usefully to form it. How much that interferes can be seen when we try to value contemporary poetry. It is a matter of continual experience that even critics of considerable insight and sureness of taste are yet capable of the most extraordinarily wrong judgments, whether on the side of appreciation or of depreciation, when they have to pass a verdict on their contemporaries. And this is because a crowd of accidental influences belonging to the effect of the time and the mental environment upon our mentality exercise an exaggerated domination and distort or colour the view of our mental eye upon its object. But apart from this there is always something essential to our present personality which has a right to be heard. For we are all of us souls developing in a constant endeavour to get into unity with the spirit in life through its many forms of manifestation and on many different lines. And as there is in Indian Yoga a principle of *adhikâra*, something in the immediate power of a man's nature that determines by its characteristics his right

to this or that way of Yoga, of union, which, whatever its merits or its limitations, is his right way because it is most helpful to him personally, so in all our activities of life and mind there is this principle of *adhikāra*. That which we can appreciate in poetry and still more the way in which we appreciate it, is that in it and us which is most helpful to us and therefore, for the time being at least, right for us in our attempt to get into union with the universal or the transcendent beauty through the revealing ideas and motives and revealing forms of poetic creation.

This is the individual aspect of the personal or time element. But there is also a larger movement to which we belong, both ourselves and the poet and his poetry ; or rather it is the same movement of the general soul of mankind in the same endeavour towards the same objective. In poetry this shows itself in a sort of evolution from the objective to the inward, from the inward to the spiritual, an evolution which has many curves and turns and cycles, many returns upon past motives and imperfect anticipations of future motives, a general labour of self-enlargement and self-finding. It is a clear idea of this evolution which may most helpfully inform the historical or evolutionary element in our judgment and appreciation of poetry. And this general movement we see working itself out in different forms and on different lines through the souls of the nations and peoples who have arrived at a strong self-expression by the things of the mind, art and thought and poetry. These things do not indeed form the whole of the movement even as they do not make up the whole of the life of the people ; they rather represent its highest points,—or the highest with the exception of the spiritual, in the few nations that have powerfully developed the spiritual force within,—and in them we best see the inner character and aim of that line of the movement.

This general evolution has its own natural periods or ages ; but as with the stone, bronze and other ages discovered by the archaeologists, their time periods do not correspond in all the peoples which have evolved them. Moreover, they do not always follow each other in quite the same order ; for in things psychological the Spirit in the world varies his movements more freely than in things physical. There, besides, he can anticipate the motives of a

higher stratum of psychological development while yet he lives the general life of a lower stratum ; so too when he has got on to a higher level of development, he may go strongly back to a past and inferior motive and see how it works out when altered by the motives and powers of the superior medium. There is too here a greater complexity of unseen or half-seen subconscious and super-conscious tendencies and influences at work upon the comparatively small part of us which is conscious of what it is doing. And very often a nation in its self-expression is both helped and limited by what has been left behind from the evolution of a past self which, being dead, yet liveth.

Thus, the Indian spirit could seize powerfully the spiritual motive in an age which lived a strenuous objective life and was strongly objective in its normal outward mentality, and could express it at first in the concrete forms proper to that life and mentality converted into physical symbols of the supraphysical and then, by a rapid liberation, in its own proper voice, so producing the sacred poetry of the Veda and Upanishads. An Italy with the Graeco-Roman past in its blood could seize intellectually on the motives of catholic Christianity and give them a clear and supreme expression in Dante, while all Germanised Europe had only been stammering in the faltering infantile accents of romance verse or shadowing them out in Gothic stone, successful only in the most material form of the spiritual. In another direction, when it seized upon the romantic life-motive, the meeting-place of the Teuton and the Celt, we see it losing entirely the mystically sentimental Celtic element, italianising it into the sensuousness of Tasso, and italianising the rest into an intellectualised, a half imaginative, half satiric play with the superficial motives of romance,—the inevitable turn of the italianised Roman spirit. On the other hand the English spirit, having got rid of the Latin culture and holding the Celtic mind for a long time at bay, exiled into the Welsh mountains or parked beyond the pale in Ireland, followed with remarkable fidelity the natural curve and stages of the psychological evolution of poetry, taking several centuries to arrive at the intellectual motive and more to get at something like the spiritual.

Generally, every nation or people has or develops a spirit in its being, a special soul-form of the human all-soul and a law of its nature which determines the lines and turns of its evolution. All that it takes from its environment it naturally attempts to assimilate to this spirit, transmute into stuff of this soul-form, make apt to and governable by this law of its nature. All its self-expression is in conformity with them. And its poetry, art and thought are the expression of this self and of the greater possibilities of its self to which it moves. The individual poet and his poetry are part of its movement. Not that they are limited by the present temperament and outward forms of the national mind ; they may exceed them. The soul of the poet may be like a star and dwell apart ; even, his work may seem not in merely a variation from but a revolt against the limitations of the national mind. But still the roots of his personality are there in its spirit and even his variation and revolt are an attempt to bring out something that is latent and suppressed or at least something which is trying to surge up from the secret all-soul into the soul-form of the nation. Therefore to appreciate this national evolution of poetry and the relations of the poet and his work with it cannot but be fruitful, if we observe them from the point of view not so much of things external to poetry, but of its own spirit and characteristic forms and motives.

A. G.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th June 1918

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XLVI

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REBIRTH

Our theory of existence runs that the universe is a manifestation of a supreme Reality, whose primal nature is Sachchidananda ; it is a manifestation in three original terms, an infinite existence, an infinite consciousness which is in its power infinite force and will, and an infinite delight, with a fourth, effective, the all-developing Supermind, and three subordinate and limiting, mind, life and matter. We say that this material universe is only the lowest stage of a downward manifestation or involution of the manifested being of Sachchidananda into an apparent nescience of himself, the Inconscient of modern thought, out of which the evolution of his manifested being into a recovered self-consciousness,—already existing in his supreme unfallen, uninvolved nature, the Super-consciousness of which modern thought is beginning vaguely to take note,—was from the very first inevitable. It was inevitable because that which is involved, must evolve ; for it is not only there as an existence, a force hidden in its apparent opposite, and every such force must in its inmost nature be moved to find itself, to realise itself, to release itself into play, but it is the reality of that which conceals it, it is the self which the Nescience has lost and which

unmodifiable Being, for it is a modification of that self-awareness which is the very nature of its being ; therefore it contradicts the very premiss from which it starts. Illusion can give us no real, but only an illusory solution.

We say then that the supreme Reality is an Absolute not bound either by oneness or by multiplicity, but the first is the primal, the fundamental, the static truth of its manifestation, the other is the secondary, the instrumental, the active truth of its manifestation. Either, then, it becomes in the universe One that is ever manifesting multiplicity and drawing it back into featureless oneness, while beyond the universe it is the Absolute not bound by this polarity, but from which that proceeds, because the Absolute contains in its unknowable being the eternal potentiality of this play of one and many and the cosmos is the potentiality in its eternal or its eternally recurrent play ; or else even behind the universal play to which we belong, the Absolute is already in a basic self-awareness the One who is many, the eternal One who realises all that he is in the Many and who in the eternal Many realises all that they are in the One, and the universe or, let us say, any given universe,—for what know we how many universes there may be ?—is the working out of this eternal Truth of his being under certain conditions, by certain limitations of the play which give it its norm and character and for the realisation of a certain set of possibilities. The former explanation suits best with the appearances of the physical universe in which we have embodied ourselves, because it is sufficient to explain the creation and dissolution of forms out of and back into indeterminate Prakriti, Nature-Force, but it does not explain all the facts of consciousness ; it is only the second theory which entirely explains them. And it is this we must accept because we start from the premiss that consciousness is the first term and not Force ; therefore that which explains all the facts of consciousness will explain all the

therefore the whole secret meaning and drift of its action must be to seek for and recover.

Farther we say that if we consider the supreme Reality only as a being for ever one, for ever self-possessed and self-conscient, indivisible, unmodifiable, incapable of multiplicity of its being, capable only of indivisible unity, as some would have us suppose, then this manifestation with all its rhythm of involution and evolution is evidently unnecessary and quite as evidently impossible. For that which is for ever indivisible and incapable of multiplicity cannot produce in itself or out of itself a world whose very nature is the play of division, variation, multiplicity ; and it cannot produce it either out of something other than itself, for there is no such thing, since it alone exists, *ekam evādwitīyam*, one without a second. Nor can that which is in its very being ever self-conscient, develop anything of the nature of nescience ; or it can only do it by some modification of its original being which allows at least of the phenomenon of variation, division and multiplicity and the phenomenon of nescience. But this also is not possible, because its being is eternally the same and unmodifiable.

Either then that description of Sachchidananda is not the whole truth of the supreme Reality or else this whole business of cosmic action and variation, of involution and evolution, is an illusion and there is in reality no cosmic manifestation at all. But this too cannot be ; for even if we suppose that cosmic manifestation is not itself eternal or eternally recurrent, even if we suppose that it had a beginning in time and will have an end after which all will be for ever only the Silence, still the illusion exists and it can only exist in the being of the sole-existent Sachchidananda, since there is nothing else in which it can take place. But an illusion creating multiplicity is a denial of self-conscience in the ever self-conscient One, and therefore cannot be ; it is a modification of its ever

facts of Force, while that which explains all the facts of Nature-Force does not explain all the facts of consciousness, unless and until Force is seen as a power of conscious Being, and then the larger and more comprehensive must take the place of the smaller and less comprehensive generalisation.

But if we adopt this solution, rebirth of some kind is no longer a possible machinery which may or may not be accepted ; it becomes an absolute necessity, an inevitable result of the nature of existence. For it is no longer sufficient to suppose an illusory individual, created in each form by the play of consciousness, an accompaniment of it which may or may not survive the form, may or may not prolong its false continuity of self from form to form, from life to life, but which certainly need not do it. For in this world what we seem to see is individual replacing individual without any such continuity, the form dissolving, the false or transient individuality dissolving with it, while the universal alone remains eternally. That might very well be the whole principle of cosmic manifestation. In fact, as we have seen, there is only a phenomenal difference between this view and the view of the Mayavadin ; for the one difference is that in the latter there is a continuity of the strain of individuality from form to form, from life to life, but as the individuality is a falsehood, so also the continuity is false. It consists in a stream of changing personality and behind it is no true individual Person, not even a true universal Person who manifests individuality, but an unmodifiable Impersonal in whom false personalities get somehow phenomenally created and finally after a long unreal persistence are dissolved without the true Impersonal being ever affected by or at all caring for these illusory happenings. But if the cosmos is a conditional manifestation of the play of the eternal One in the being of Sachchidananda with the eternal Many, then secure behind all the

changings of our personality, and upholding the stream of its mutations there is a true Person, a real spiritual Individual, a true Purusha. The One extended in universality exists and finds himself in this individual. As the individual he finds and enjoys his full existence by his oneness with all in the universality, as the individual he finds and enjoys his oneness too with the eternal One in whom all the universal unity is founded.

If there were no finding but only the eternal enjoyment of this play of the being of Sachchidananda,—and that eternal enjoyment is the nature of certain supreme states of conscious existence,—then rebirth need not have come into operation. But there is an involution of this unity into the dividing Mind by which the present sense of the complete oneness is lost and the play of separative difference,—phenomenal, because the real unity remains unabridged behind,—comes into the forefront as a dominant reality. This play of difference finds its utmost term by the precipitation of the dividing Mind into separative form, and a basis for it in a world of separative forms is found by an involution of the active self-consciousness of Sachchidananda into a phenomenal Nescience,—phenomenal because within it, above it, supporting it is the all-conscient Spirit and the apparent Nescience turns out to be only a concentration of a certain exclusive action of his consciousness in the self-forgetfulness of the formative and creative process. In a phenomenal universe so created, the separative form becomes the foundation and the starting-point of all its original action ; therefore the individual Purusha in its cosmic relations with the One has in this physical world to base himself upon the form, to assume a body and make it his foundation and the starting-point for his development of the life and mind and spirit in the physical existence. That assumption of body we call birth, and that development and the play of relations between the individual and the universal and all other individuals

which it brings about and the growth by that progressive development towards a supreme recovery of unity with God and in God is the sum of what we call Life in the physical world.

Birth then is a necessity of the manifestation of the Purusha on the physical plane ; but his birth, whether the human or any other, cannot be in the world-order an isolated accident or a sort of sudden excursion of the Purusha into physicality without any past here or any future. In a world of involution and evolution, not of physical form only, but of conscious being through life and mind to spirit, such an isolated assumption of life in the human body would be a thing quite meaningless and inconsequential, a freak for which Nature has no place, a violence which would break the rhythm of the Spirit's self-manifestation. It would be an effect without cause and a cause without effect ; it would be a fragmentary present without a past or a future. Neither in such an order can we explain an isolated advent, a one sole birth of the soul in the human body which would be its first and last experience of the kind, by a previous existence in other worlds with a future before it in yet other fields of experience. For here life upon earth, life in the physical universe is not and cannot be a casual perch for the wanderings of the soul from world to world ; it is itself a great and slow development needing, as we now know, incalculable spaces of Time for its evolution. Human life is itself only a term in a graded series, through which the secret Spirit in the universe develops gradually his enlarging and ascending soul-consciousness.

Nor is the human soul, the human individual a free wanderer capriciously or lightly hastening from field to field according to its unfettered choice or its easily variable action and result of action. That is a radiant thought of pure spiritual freedom which may have its truth in planes beyond or in an eventual release, but is not true

at first of the earth-life, of life in the physical universe. The human birth in the world is a complex of two elements a spiritual person and a soul of personality, the former man's eternal being, the latter his cosmic and mutable being. As the spiritual person he is one in his nature and being with the freedom of Sachchidananda who has here consented to or willed his involution in the nescience for a certain round of soul-experience, impossible otherwise, and presides secretly over its evolution. As the soul of personality he is himself part of that evolution of the soul-experience in the forms of Nature and his own evolution of it must follow the laws and the lines of the universal evolution. As a spirit he is one with the Transcendence immanent in the world and comprehensive of it ; as a soul he is at once one with and part of the universality of Sachchidananda self-expressed in the world and his self-expression must go through the same stages, his soul-experience follow the revolutions of the wheel of Brahman.

The universal Spirit in things involved in the Nescience of the physical universe evolves itself in the succession of physical forms up the graded series of Matter, Life, Mind and Spirit. It emerges first as a secret soul in material forms quite subject to the nescience, develops as a Soul still secret, but about to emerge, in vital forms on the borders between nescience and the partial light of consciousness which is our ignorance, develops still farther as the initially conscient Soul in the animal mind and finally as the half-conscient, but not yet fully conscient Soul in man. This universal Man is that which is developing in the human race the power that shall grow to supermind and spirit and become the God in man who is aware of his true and integral self and the divine universality of his nature. The individual must have followed this line of development ; he must have presided over a soul-experience in the lower forms of life before he took up the human evolution ; as the One was capable of assuming

in its universality these lower forms of the plant and animal, so must the individual have been capable of assuming them.

To suppose otherwise would be to suppose that the spirit which now presides over the human soul-experience, is formed by its present human mentality and the human body, exists by that and cannot exist apart from it, cannot ever go below or above it. In fact it would then be reasonable to suppose that it has come into existence by the appearance of the human mind and body in the evolution and would disappear by their disappearance. But body and mind are not the creators of the spirit, the spirit is the creator of the mind and body ; it develops these principles out of its being, but it is not developed into being out of them, it is not a compound of their elements or a resultant. If it appears to evolve out of mind and body, that is because it gradually manifests itself in them and not because it is created by them or exists by them ; as it manifests, they are revealed as subordinate terms of its being and are to be finally taken up out of their present imperfection and transformed into visible forms and instruments of the spirit. Our conception of the spirit is of something which is not constituted by name and form, but assumes various forms of body and mind according to the various manifestations of its soul-being, and this it does here by a successive evolution. It evolves successive forms and successive strata of consciousness, it is not bound always to assume one form and no other, to possess one kind of mentality which is its sole possible subjective manifestation.

What we see of Nature and of human nature justifies this view of a birth of the individual soul from form to form until it reaches the human level of manifested consciousness which is its instrument for rising to yet higher levels. We see that Nature develops from stage to stage and in each stage takes up its past and transforms that in-

to stuff of its new development. We see too that human nature is of the same make, all the earth-past is there in it ; it has an element of matter taken up by life, an element of life taken up by mind, an element of mind which is being taken up by spirit ; the very nature of the human being presupposes a material, a vital and an animal past. And let us not say that this is because material Nature developed by evolution his life and his body and his animal mind, and only afterwards did a soul descend into the form so created : there is a certain truth behind this idea, but not the truth which that formula would suggest. For that supposes a gulf between soul and body, between soul and life, between soul and mind, which does not exist ; there is no body without soul, no body that is not itself a form of soul : Matter itself is substance and power of spirit and could not exist if it were anything else, for nothing can exist which is not substance and power of Brahman ; and if Matter, then still more clearly and certainly Life and Mind.

We arrive then necessarily at this conclusion that human birth is a term at which the soul must arrive in a long succession of rebirths which had for its previous and preparatory terms the lower forms of life upon earth, life, that is to say, in the physical universe on the basis of the physical principle. Then the farther question arises whether, humanity once attained, this succession of rebirths still continues and, if so, how, by what series or by what alternations. And first, can the soul, having once arrived at humanity, go back to the animal life and body, as the old popular theories of transmigration have supposed ? It seems impossible that it should so go back, at least with any entirety, and for this reason that the transit from animal to human life means a decisive conversion of consciousness, quite as decisive as the conversion of the vital consciousness of the plant into the mental consciousness of the animal. It is surely impossible that a conversion

so decisive should be reversed and the decision of the spirit come, as it were, to naught. It could only be possible for human souls, supposing such to exist, in whom the conversion was not decisive, souls that had developed far enough to make, occupy or assume a human body, but not enough to ensure the safety of this assumption, not enough to remain secure in and faithful to the human type of consciousness. Or at most there might be, supposing certain animal propensities to be vehement enough to demand a separate satisfaction quite of their own kind, a sort of partial rebirth, a loose holding by a human soul of an animal form, with an immediate subsequent reversion to its normal progression. The movement of Nature is always sufficiently complex for us not to deny dogmatically such a possibility, and if it be a fact, then there may exist this modicum of truth behind the exaggerated popular belief which assumes an animal rebirth of the soul once lodged in man to be quite as normal and possible as a human reincarnation. But whether the animal reversion is possible or not, the normal law must be the recurrence of birth in new human forms for a soul that has once become capable of humanity.

But why a succession of human births and not one alone ? For the same reason which has made the human birth itself a culminating point of the past succession, the previous upward series,—it must be so by the very necessity of the spiritual evolution. For the soul has not finished what it has to do by merely developing into humanity ; it has still to develop that humanity into its higher possibilities. Obviously the soul that lodges in a Bushman or a Basuto has not yet exhausted the necessity of human birth, has not developed the whole meaning of humanity, has not worked out all the sense of Sachchidananda in the universal Man ; neither has the soul lodged in a vitalistic European occupied with dynamic production and vital pleasure or in an Asiatic peasant engrossed

in the ignorant round of the domestic and economic life. We may reasonably doubt whether even a Plato or a Shankara marks the crown and therefore the end of the outflowing of the spirit in man. We are apt to suppose that these may be the limit, because these and others like them seem to us the highest point which the mind and soul of man can reach, but that may be the illusion of our present possibility. There may be a higher or at least a larger possibility which the Divine intends yet to realise in man, and, if so, it is precisely the return of these highest souls which would be needed to lead the way into it and to open the gates. At any rate this present highest point at least must be reached before we can write finis on the recurrence of the human birth for the individual. Man is there to move from the ignorance and from the little life which he is in his mind and body to the knowledge and the large divine life which he can compass by the unfolding of the spirit. And at least the opening out of the spirit in him, the knowledge of his real self and the leading of the spiritual life must be attained before he can go definitely and for ever elsewhere. There may too be beyond this initial culmination a greater flowering of the spirit in the human life of which we have as yet only the first intimations.

But in all this we have considered only the earthly evolution, the evolution of the spirit on the physical plane. We know that beyond the physical there are other and higher planes whose action is intimately concerned with and has power upon the physical evolution. We have now to ask what is their relation to human rebirth and the movement from life to life which we have developed in the cycle of the spirit.

Essays on the Gita

NIRVANA AND WORKS IN THE WORLD

The union of the soul with the Purushottama by a Yoga of the whole being is the complete teaching of the Gita and not the union with the immutable self alone as in the narrower doctrine which follows the exclusive way of knowledge. That is why the Gita subsequently, after it has effected the reconciliation of knowledge and works, is able to develop the idea of love and devotion, unified with both works and knowledge, as the highest height of the way to the supreme secret. For if the union with the immutable Self were the sole secret or the highest secret, that would not at all be possible ; for then at a given point our inner basis for love and devotion, no less than our inner foundation of works, would crumble away and collapse. Union utter and exclusive with the immutable Self alone means the abolition of the whole point of view of the mutable being not only in its ordinary and inferior action but in its very roots, in all that makes its existence possible, not only in the works of its ignorance, but in the works of its knowledge. It would mean the abolition of all that difference in conscious poise and activity between the human soul and the divine which makes possible the play of the Kshara ; for the action of the Kshara would become then entirely a play of the ignorance without any root or basis of divine reality in it. On the contrary,

union by Yoga with the Purushottama means the knowledge and enjoyment of our oneness with him in our self-existent being and of a certain differentiation in our active being. It is the persistence of the latter in the play of divine works with the motive power of divine love constituted by a perfected divine Nature, it is the vision of the Divine in the world harmonised with a realisation of the Divine in the self which makes action and devotion possible to the liberated man, and not only possible but inevitable in the perfect mode of his being.

But the direct way to union lies through the firm realisation of the immutable self, and it is the Gita's insistence on this as a first necessity after which alone works and devotion can acquire their whole divine meaning, that makes it possible for us to mistake its drift. For if we take the passages in which it insists most rigorously upon this necessity and neglect to observe the whole sequence of thought in which they stand, we may easily come to the conclusion that it does really teach actionless absorption as the final state of the soul and action only as a preliminary means towards stillness in the motionless Immutable. It is in the close of the fifth and throughout the sixth chapter that this insistence is strongest and most comprehensive. There we get the description of a Yoga which would seem at first sight to be incompatible with works and we get the repeated use of the word Nirvana to describe the status to which the Yogin arrives.

The mark of this status is the supreme peace of self-extinction, *çântim nirvâna-paramâm*, and, as if to make it clear that it is not the Buddhist's Nirvana in a blissful non-existence, but the Vedantic that it intends, the Gita uses always the phrase *brahmâ-nirvâna*, extinction in the Brahman; and the Brahman here certainly seems to mean the Immutable, it denotes primarily at least the inner timeless Self withdrawn from active participation in the externality of Nature. We have to see then what is

the drift of the Gita here, whether this peace is the peace of the absolute inactive cessation and whether the self extinction in the Akshara means the absolute excision of the knowledge of the Kshara and of action in the Kshara. We are accustomed indeed to regard Nirvana and existence and action in the world as incompatible and we might be inclined to argue that the use of the word is by itself sufficient and decides the question. But if we look closely at Buddhism, we shall doubt whether the incompatibility really existed even for the Buddhists; and if we look closely at the Gita, we shall see that it does not exist in this supreme Vedantic teaching.

Thus it is that the Gita after speaking of the perfect equality of the Brahman-knower who has risen into the Brahman-consciousness, *brahmanîd brahmani sthitah*, develops its idea of Brahmayoga and of nirvana in the Brahman; "When the soul is no longer attached to the touches of outward things, then one finds the happiness that exists in the Self; such a one enjoys an imperishable happiness, because his self is in Yoga, *yukta*, by Yoga with the Brahman." This non-attachment is essential, it says, in order to be free from the attacks of desire and wrath and passion, without which true happiness is not possible, and this happiness, this equality is to be gained entirely by man in the body: he is not to suffer any least remnant of the subjection to the lower nature to remain in the idea that the perfect release will come by a putting off of the body; perfect freedom is to be won here upon earth and in the human life, *prâk çarîra-vimokshanât*. It then continues, "He who has the inner happiness and the inner ease and repose and the inner light, that Yogin becomes the Brahman and reaches self-extinction in the Brahman, *brahma-nirvânam*." Here, clearly, Nirvana means the extinction of the ego in the higher spiritual, inner Self, that which is for ever timeless, spaceless, not bound by the chain of cause and effect and the changes

of the world-mutation, self-blissful, self-illuminated and for ever at peace. The Yogin ceases to be the ego, the little person limited by the mind and the body ; he becomes the Brahman ; he is unified in consciousness with the immutable divinity of the eternal Self which is immanent in his natural being.

But is this a going in into some deep sleep of samadhi away from all world-consciousness, the preparatory movement for that dissolution of the natural being in the Self who is beyond Nature and her works, *laya*, *moksha* ? Is that withdrawal necessary for Nirvana, or is Nirvana a state which can exist simultaneously with world-consciousness. Apparently the latter, for in the two succeeding verses the Gita goes on to say, "Sages win nirvana in the Brahman, they in whom the stains of sin are effaced and the knot of doubt is cut asunder, masters of their selves, who are occupied in doing good to all creatures, *sarva-bhûta-hite ratâh*. *Yatis* (those who practice self-mastery by Yoga and austerity) who are delivered from desire and wrath and have gained self-mastery, for them Nirvana in the Brahman exists all about them, encompassing them, because they have knowledge of the Self." This is clearly a large extension of the idea of Nirvana. Freedom from all stain of the passions and the self-mastery of the equal mind on which that freedom is founded, equality to all beings, *sarvabhûteshu*, the destruction of the doubts of the ignorance which divides us from the all-unifying Divine, and the knowledge of the One Self within us and in all are evidently the conditions of Nirvana which are laid down in these verses of the Gita.

This Nirvana is compatible with world-consciousness and with action in the world, for the sages who possess it are conscious of and in intimate relation by works with the Divine in the mutable universe ; they are occupied with the good of all creatures, *sarvabhûta-hite*, with the experiences of the Kshara Purusha,—for the

Kshara, the Gita tells us, is all existences, *sarvabhûtâni*, —and the doing universal good to all is an action in the mutability of Nature. Brahman in whom we find Nirvana, in whose consciousness we lose the separative ego-consciousness, is not only within us, but within all these existences, exists not only above and apart from all these universal happenings, but pervades them and is extended in them. Therefore Nirvana in the Brahman is a passage from the limited consciousness, falsifying and dividing, which is brought into being on the surface of existence by the lower Maya of the three gunas, a passage into the true unifying consciousness which is its heart and its continent and its whole original and eternal and final truth. Therefore Nirvana when we gain it, enter into it, is not only within us, but all around, *abhito vartate* ; for this is not only the Brahman-consciousness which lives secret within us, but it is the Brahman-consciousness in which we live. It is not only the Self which we are within, the supreme Self of our individual being, but the Self which we are without, the supreme Self of the universe, the self of all existences. By living in that self, we live in all, and no longer in our egoistic being alone ; by oneness with that self, oneness with all in the universe becomes the very nature of our being and the root status of our active consciousness and root motive of all our action.

But again we have two verses which might seem to lead away from this conclusion. " Having put outside of himself all outward touches and concentrated the vision between the eyebrows and made equal the *prana* and the *apana* moving within the nostrils, having controlled the senses, the mind and the understanding, the sage devoted to liberation, from whom desire and wrath and fear have passed away, is ever free." Here we have a process of Yoga which brings in an element other than the Yoga of works and other even than the pure Yoga of knowledge ;

it belongs in all its features to the system, the askesis of Rajayoga. There is the conquest of all the movements of the mind, *chittavritti-nirodha*, there is the control of the breathing, Pranayama, there is the drawing in of the sense and the vision, all of them processes which lead to the inner trance of Sanadhi, and the object of all of them is *moksha*, and *moksha* means ordinarily the dissolution not only of the separative ego-consciousness, but of the whole active consciousness into the highest Brahman. Does the Gita give this process in that sense as the last movement of release or only as a special means and aid to overcome the outward-going mind? And is this the finale, the climax, the last word? We shall find reason to regard it as both a special means, an aid, and at least one gate of the final release. But even here in this passage it is not the last word; for the last word, the finale, the climax comes in a verse that follows, the last couplet of the chapter. "When a man has known Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifice and tapasya (of all askesis and energisms), the mighty lord of all the worlds, the friend of all creatures, he comes by the peace."

We get back to the great idea of the Gita, the idea of the Purushottama,—that name is not given till close upon the end, but always it is that which Krishna means by his "I" and "me," the Divine who is there as the one self in our timeless immutable being, who is there in the world in all existences, the master of the silence and the peace, the master of the power and the action, who is here incarnate as the divine charioteer of the stupendous conflict, the Transcendent, the Self, the All, the master of every individual being. He is the enjoyer of all sacrifice and of all tapasya, therefore shall the seeker of liberation do works as a sacrifice and as a tapasya; he is the lord of all the worlds, manifested in Nature and in these beings, therefore shall the liberated man still do works for the right government and leading on of the peoples in these worlds,

lokasaṅgraha ; he is the friend of all existences, therefore is the sage who has found Nirvana within him and all around, still and always occupied with the good of all creatures,—even as the nirvana of Mahayana Buddhism took for its highest sign the works of a universal compassion. Therefore too, even when he has found oneness with the Divine in his timeless and immutable self, is he still capable, since he embraces the relations also of the play of Nature, of divine love and of love for the Divine, of bhakti.

That this is the real drift of the meaning, is made still more clear in the sixth chapter which is a large comment on and a full development of the idea of these closing verses of the fifth, showing the importance which the Gita attaches to them. We shall therefore run as briefly as possible through the substance of this sixth chapter. First the Teacher emphasises his often repeated asseveration about the real essence of Sannyasa, that it is an inward, not an outward renunciation. "Whoever does the work to be done without resort to its fruits, he is the Sannyasin and the Yogin, not the man who lights not the sacrificial fire and does not the works. What they have called renunciation (Sannyasa), know to be in truth Yoga ; for none becomes a Yogin who has not renounced the desire-will in the mind." Works are to be done, but with what purpose and in what order ? They are first to be done while ascending the hill of Yoga, for then works are the cause, *kāraṇam*. The cause of what ? The cause of self-perfection, of liberation, of nirvana in the Brahman, for by doing works with a steady practice of the inner renunciation this perfection, this liberation, this conquest of the desire-mind and the Yoga-self and the lower nature are easily accomplished.

But when one has got to the top ? Then works are no longer the cause ; the calm of self-mastery and self-possession gained by works becomes the cause. Again, the cause of what ? Of fixity in the self, in the Brahman-

consciousness and of the perfect equality in which the divine works of the liberated man are done. "For when one does not get attached to the objects of sense or to works and has renounced all will of desire in the mind, then is he said to have ascended to the top of Yoga." That, as we know already, is the spirit in which the liberated man does works, without desire and attachment, without the egoistic personal will and the mental seeking which is the parent of desire. He has conquered his lower self, he has reached the perfect calm in which his highest self is manifest and that highest self is always concentrated in its true being, *samāhita*, in Samadhi not only in the trance of the inward-drawn consciousness, but always, in the waking state of the mind as well, in exposure to the causes of desire and of the disturbance of calm,—grief and pleasure, heat and cold, honour and disgrace, all the dualities, *çīteshuasukhaduhkheshu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ*. This higher self is here the Akshara, *kūṭastha*, standing above the changes and the perturbations of the natural being, and the Yogin is said to be in Yoga with it when he also is the *kūṭastha*, satisfied with self-knowledge, equal-minded to all things and happenings and persons.

But this Yoga is after all no easy thing to acquire, as Arjuna indeed shortly afterwards suggests, for the restless mind is always liable to be pulled down from these heights by the attacks of outward things and to fall back into the strong control of grief and passion and inequality. Therefore, it would seem, the Gita proceeds to give us in addition to its general method of knowledge and works a special process of Rajayogic meditation also, a powerful method of practice, *abhyāsa*, a strong way to the complete control of the mind and all its workings. In this process the Yogin is to practise continually union with the Self, sitting apart and alone, with all desire and idea of passion banished from his mind, self-controlled in his whole being and consciousness. "He should set in a pure spot

his firm seat, neither too high, nor yet too low, covered with a cloth, with a deer-skin, with sacred grass, and there seated with a concentrated mind and with the workings of the mental consciousness and the senses under control he should practise Yoga for self-purification, *atmaṣṇidhaye*." The posture he takes must be the motionless erect posture proper to the practice of Rajayoga, and the vision should be drawn in and fixed between the eye-brows, "not regarding the regions." The mind is to be kept calm and free from fear and the vow of Brahmacharya observed; the whole controlled mentality must be devoted and turned to the Divine so that the lower action of the consciousness shall be merged in the higher peace. For the object to be attained is the still peace of Nirvana. "Thus always putting himself in Yoga by control of his mind the Yogin attains to the supreme peace of Nirvana which has its foundation in *Me, cāntim nirvāṇaparamām matsausthām*"

This peace of Nirvana is reached when all the mental consciousness is perfectly controlled and liberated from desire and remains still in the Self, when, motionless like the light of a lamp in a windless place, it ceases from its restless action, shut in from its outward motion, and by the silence and stillness of the mind the Self is seen within, not disfigured as in the mind, but in the Self, not as it is seen falsely or partially by the mind and represented to us through the ego, but by the Self. Then is the soul satisfied and knows its own true and exceeding bliss, not the untr tranquil happiness which is the portion of the mind and the senses, but that in whose security it can no longer fall away from the spiritual truth of its being. Not even the fieriest assault of mental grief can disturb it, for mental grief comes to us from outside, is a reaction to external touches, and this is the inner, the self-existent happiness of those who no longer accept the slavery of the unstable mental reactions to external touches. It is the putting away of the contact with pain, the divorce of the mind's marriage

with grief, *dukkha-sanyoga-viyogam*. The firm winning of this inalienable spiritual bliss is Yoga, is the divine union ; this is the greatest of all gains and the treasure besides which all others lose their value. Therefore is this Yoga to be resolutely practised without yielding to any discouragement by difficulty or failure until the release, the bliss of Nirvana is secured as an eternal possession.

The main stress here has been on the stilling of the emotive mind, the mind of desire and the senses which are the recipients of outward touches and reply to them with the customary emotional reactions ; but even the mental thought has to be stilled in the silence of the Self. First, all the desires born of the desire-will have to be wholly abandoned without any exception or residue and the senses have to be held in by the mind so that they shall not run out to all sides after their disorderly and restless habit, but next the mind itself has to be seized by the buddhi and drawn inward. One should slowly cease from mental action by a buddhi held in the grasp of fixity and having fixed the mind in the self one should not think of anything at all. Whenever the restless and unquiet mind goes forth, it should be controlled and brought into subjection in the Self. For when the mind is thus quieted, then there comes upon the Yogin the highest, stainless, passionless bliss of the soul that has become the Brahman. " Thus freed from stain of passion and putting himself constantly into Yoga, the Yogin easily and happily enjoys the touch of the Brahman which is an exceeding bliss."

And yet the result is not, while one yet lives, a Nirvana which puts away every possibility of action in the world, every relation with beings in the world. It would seem at first that it ought to be so. When all the desires and passions have ceased, when the mind is no longer permitted to throw itself out in thought, when the practice of this silent and solitary Yoga has become the rule, what farther action or relation with the world of outward

touches and mutable appearances is possible ? No doubt, the Yogin for a time still remains in the body, but the cave, the forest, the mountain-top seem now the fittest, the only possible scene of his continued living and constant trance of Samadhi his sole joy and occupation. But, first, while this solitary Yoga is being pursued, the renunciation of all other action is not recommended by the Gita. This Yoga, it says, is not for the man who gives up sleep and food and play and action, even as it is not for those who indulge too much in these things of the life and the body ; but the sleep and waking, the food, the play, the putting forth of effort in works should all be *yukta*. This is generally interpreted as meaning that all should be moderate, regulated, done in fit measure, and that may indeed be the significance. But at any rate when the Yoga is attained, all this has to be *yukta* in another sense, the ordinary sense of the word everywhere else in the Gita. In all states, in waking and in sleeping, in food and play and action the Yogin will then be in Yoga with the Divine, and all will be done in the consciousness of the Divine as the self and as the All and as that which supports and contains his life and his action. Desire and ego and personal will and the thought of the mind are the motives of action only in the lower nature ; when the ego is lost and the Yogin becomes Brahman, when he lives in and is, even, a transcendent and universal consciousness, action comes spontaneously out of that, luminous knowledge higher than the mental thought comes out of that, a power other and mightier than the personal will comes out of that, personal action has ceased, all has been taken up into the Brahman and assumed by the Divine, *mayi samnyasya karmāni*.

For thus the Gita describes the nature of this self-realisation and the result of the Yoga which comes by Nirvana of the separative ego-mind and its motives of thought and feeling and action into the Brahman-cons-

ciousness. "The man whose self is in Yoga, sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self, he sees all with an equal vision." All that he sees, is to him the Self, all is his self, all is the Divine. But is there no danger, if he dwells at all in the mutability of the Kshara, of his losing the Self and falling back into the mind, of the Divine losing him and the world getting him, of his losing the Divine and getting back in its place the ego and the lower nature? No, says the Gita; "he who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, to him I do not get lost, nor does he get lost to me." For this peace of Nirvana, though it is gained through the Akshara, is founded upon the being of the Purushottama and that is extended, the Brahman is extended in the world of beings as well and not imprisoned in its own transcendence. One has to see all things as He and live and act wholly in that vision; and that is the perfect fruit of the Yoga.

But why act? Is it not safer to sit in one's solitude looking out upon the world, if you will, seeing it in Brahman, in the Divine, but not taking part in it, not moving in it, not living in it, acting in it, living rather ordinarily in the inner Samadhi? Should not that be the law, the rule, the dharma of this highest spiritual condition? No, again; for the liberated Yogin there is no other law, rule, dharma than simply this, to live in the Divine and love the Divine and be one with all beings; his freedom is an absolute and not a contingent freedom, self-existent and not dependent any longer on any rule of conduct, law of life or limitation of any kind. He has no longer any need of a process of Yoga, because he is now perpetually in Yoga. "The Yogin who has taken his stand upon oneness and loves Me in all beings, however and in all ways he lives and acts, lives and acts in Me." The love of the world is founded now on the love of God and in that love there is no peril and no shortcoming. Fear and disgust of the world may often be necessary for the recoil

from the lower nature, for it is really the fear and disgust of our own ego which reflects itself in the world. But to see God in the world is to fear nothing, it is to embrace all in the being of God ; to see all as the Divine is to hate and loathe nothing, but love God in the world and the world in God.

But at least the things of the lower nature will be shunned and feared, the things which the Yogin has taken so much trouble to surmount ? Not this either ; all is embraced in the equality of the self-vision. " He, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything in the image of the self whether it be grief or it be happiness, him I hold to be the supreme Yogin. " And by this it is not meant at all that he himself shall fall from the griefless spiritual bliss and feel again worldly unhappiness even in the sorrow of others, but seeing in others the play of the dualities which he himself has surmounted, he shall still see all as himself, his self in all, God in all and, not disturbed or bewildered by the appearances of these things, moved only by them to help and heal, to occupy himself with the good of all beings, to lead men to the spiritual bliss, to work for the progress of the world Godwards, he shall live the divine life, so long as days upon earth are his portion. He who can do this, can thus embrace all things in God, can look calmly on the lower nature and the works of the Maya of the three gunas and act in them and upon them without perturbation or fall or disturbance from the height and power of the spiritual oneness, free in the largeness of the God-vision, sweet and great and luminous in the strength of the God-nature, may well be declared to be the supreme Yogin.

The Gita brings in here as always bhakti as the climax of the Yoga, *sarvabhūtasthitam yo nām bhajati ekatvam asthitah* ; that may be said almost to sum up the whole final result of the Gita's teaching—whoever loves God in all and his soul is founded upon the divine oneness, however

he lives and acts, lives and acts in God. And to emphasize it still more, after an intervention of Arjuna and a reply to his doubt as to how so difficult a Yoga can be at all possible for the restless mind of man, the divine Teacher returns to this idea, makes it his culminating utterance, "The Yogin is greater than the doers of askesis, greater than the men of knowledge, greater than the men of works ; become then the Yogin, O Arjuna," the Yogin, that is to say one who seeks for and attains, by works and knowledge and askesis or by whatever other means, not even spiritual knowledge or power or anything else for their own sake, but the union with God alone ; for in that all else is contained and lifted beyond itself to a divinest significance. But even among Yogins the greatest is the Bhakta. "Of all Yogins he who with all his inner self given up to me, for me has love and faith, *çraddhâvân bhajate*, him I hold to be the most united with me in Yoga." It is this that is the closing word of these first six chapters and contains in itself the seed of the rest, of that which still remains unspoken and is nowhere entirely spoken ; for it is always and remains something of a mystery and a secret, *rahasyam*, the highest spiritual mystery and the divine secret.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XLIII

THE GODWARD EMOTIONS.

The principle of Yoga is to turn Godward all or any of the powers of the human consciousness so that through that activity of the being there may be contact, relation, union. In the Yoga of Bhakti it is the emotional nature that is made the instrument. Its main principle is to adopt some human relation between man and the Divine Being by which through the ever intenser flowing of the heart's emotions towards him the human soul may at last be wedded to and grow one with him in a passion of divine Love. It is not ultimately the pure peace of oneness or the power and desireless will of oneness, but the ecstatic joy of union which the devotee seeks by his Yoga. Every feeling that can make the heart ready for this ecstasy the Yoga admits ; everything that detracts from it must increasingly drop away as the strong union of love becomes closer and more perfect.

All the feelings with which religion approaches the worship, service and love of God, the Yoga admits, if not as its final accompaniments, yet as preparatory movements of the emotional nature. But there is one feeling with which the Yoga, at least as practised in India, has very little dealing. In certain religions, in most perhaps, the idea of the fear of God plays a very large part, sometimes the largest, and the Godfearing man is the typical

worshipper of these religions. The sentiment of fear is indeed perfectly consistent with devotion of a certain kind and up to a certain point ; at its highest it rises into a worship of the divine Power, the divine Justice, divine Law, divine Righteousness, an ethical obedience, an awed reverence for the almighty Creator and Judge. Its motive is therefore ethico-religious and it belongs not so strictly to the devotee, but to the man of works moved by a devotion to the divine ordainer and judge of his works. It regards God as the King and does not approach too near the glory of his throne unless justified by righteousness or led there by a mediator who will turn away the divine wrath for sin. Even when it draws nearest, it keeps an awed distance between itself and the high object of its worship. It cannot embrace the Divine with all the fearless confidence of the child in his mother or of the lover in his beloved or with that intimate sense of oneness which perfect love brings with it.

The origin of this divine fear was crude enough in some of the primitive popular religions. It was the perception of powers in the world greater than man, obscure in their nature and workings, which seemed always ready to strike him down in his prosperity and to smite him for any actions which displeased them. Fear of the gods arose from man's ignorance of God and his ignorance of the laws that govern the world. It attributed to the higher powers caprice and human passion ; it made them in the image of the great ones of the earth, capable of whim, tyranny, personal enmity, jealous of any greatness in man which might raise him above the littleness of terrestrial nature and bring him too near to the divine nature. With such notions no real devotion could arise, except that doubtful kind which the weaker may feel for the stronger whose protection he can buy by worship and gifts and propitiation and obedience to such laws as he may have laid upon those beneath him and may enforce by rewards and

punishments, or else the submissive and prostrate reverence and adoration which one may feel for a greatness, glory, wisdom, sovereign power which is above the world and is the source or at any rate the regulator of all its laws and happenings.

A nearer approach to the beginnings of the way of devotion becomes possible when this element of divine Power disengages itself from these crudities and fixes on the idea of a divine ruler, creator of the world and master of the Law who governs the earth and heavens and is the guide and helper and saviour of his creatures. This larger and higher idea of the diviné Being long kept many elements and still keeps some elements of the old crudity. The Jews who brought it forward most prominently and from whom it overspread a great part of the world, could believe in a God of righteousness who was exclusive, arbitrary, wrathful, jealous, often cruel and even wantonly sanguinary. Even now it is possible for some to believe in a Creator who has made heaven and hell, an eternal hell, the two poles of his creation, and has even according to some religions predestined the souls he has created not only to sin and punishment, but to an eternal damnation. But even apart from these extravagances of a childish religious belief, the idea of the almighty Judge, Legislator, King, is a crude and imperfect idea of the Divine, when taken by itself, because it takes an inferior and an external truth for the main truth and it tends to prevent a higher approach to a more intimate reality. It exaggerates the importance of the sense of sin and thereby prolongs and increases the soul's fear and self-distrust and weakness. It attaches the pursuit of virtue and the shunning of sin to the idea of rewards and punishment, though given in an after life, and makes them dependent on the lower motives of fear and interest instead of the higher spirit which should govern the ethical being. It makes hell and heaven and not the Divine himself the object of the human soul

in its religious living. These crudities have served their turn in the slow education of the human mind, but they are of no utility to the Yogin who knows that whatever truth they may represent belongs rather to the external relations of the developing human soul with the external law of the universe than any intimate truth of the inner relations of the human soul with the Divine ; but it is these which are the proper field of Yoga.

Still out of this conception there arise certain developments which bring us nearer to the threshold of the Yoga of devotion. First, there can emerge the idea of the Divine as the source and law and aim of our ethical being and from this there can come the knowledge of him as the highest Self to which our active nature aspires, the Will to which we have to assimilate our will, the eternal Right and Purity and Truth and Wisdom into harmony with which our nature has to grow and towards whose being our being is attracted. By this way we arrive at the Yoga of works, and this Yoga has a place for personal devotion to the Divine, for the divine Will appears as the Master of our works to whose voice we must listen, whose divine impulsion we must obey and whose work it is the sole business of our active life and will to do. Secondly, there emerges the idea of the divine Spirit, the father of all who extends his wings of benignant protection and love over all his creatures, and from that grows between the soul and the Divine the relation of father and child, a relation of love, and as a result the relation of brotherhood with our fellow beings. These relations of the Divine into the calm pure light of whose nature we have to grow and the Master whom we approach through works and service, the Father who responds to the love of the soul that approaches him as the child, are admitted elements of the Yoga of devotion.

The moment we come well into these developments and their deeper spiritual meaning, the motive of the fear

of God becomes otiose, superfluous and even impossible. It is of importance chiefly in the ethical field when the soul has not yet grown sufficiently to follow good for its own sake and needs an authority above it whose wrath or whose stern passionless judgment it can fear and found upon that fear its fidelity to virtue. When we grow into spirituality, this motive can no longer remain except by the lingering on of some confusion in the mind, some persistence of the old mentality. Moreover, the ethical aim in Yoga is different from that of the external idea of virtue. Ordinarily, ethics is regarded as a sort of machinery of right action, the act is everything and how to do the right act is the whole question and the whole trouble. But to the Yogin action is chiefly important not for its own sake, but rather as a means for the growth of the soul Godward. Therefore what Indian spiritual writings lay stress upon is not so much the quality of the action to be done as the quality of the soul from which the action flows, upon its truth, fearlessness, purity, love, compassion, benevolence, absence of the will to hurt, and upon the actions as their outflowings. The old western idea that human nature is intrinsically bad and virtue is a thing to be followed out in despite of our fallen nature to which it is contrary, is foreign to the Indian mentality trained from ancient times in the ideas of the Yogins. Our nature contains, as well as its passionate rajasic and its downward-tending tamasic quality, a purer sattwic element and it is the encouragement of this, its highest part, which is the business of ethics. By it we increase the divine nature, *daivī prakṛiti*, which is present in us and get rid of the Titanic and demoniac elements. Not therefore the Hebraic righteousness of the Godfearing man, but the purity, love, beneficence, truth, fearlessness, harmlessness of the saint and the God-lover are the goal of the ethical growth according to this notion. And, speaking more largely, to grow into the divine nature is the consummation of the ethical being. This can

be done best by realising God as the higher Self, the guiding and uplifting Will or the Master whom we love and serve. Not fear of him, but love of him and aspiration to the freedom and eternal purity of his being must be the motive.

Certainly, fear enters into the relations of the master and the servant and even of the father and the child, but only when they are on the human level, when control and subjection and punishment figure predominantly in them and love is obliged to efface itself more or less behind the mask of authority. The Divine even as the Master does not punish anybody, does not threaten, does not force obedience. It is the human soul that has freely to come to the Divine and offer itself to his overpowering force that he may seize and uplift it towards his own divine levels, and give it that joy of mastery of the finite nature by the Infinite and of service to the Highest by which there comes freedom from the ego and the lower nature. Love is the key of this relation, and this service, *dāsyam*, is in Indian Yoga the happy service of the divine Friend or the passionate service to the divine Beloved. The Master of the worlds who in the Gita demands of his servant, the bhakta, to be nothing more in life than his instrument, makes this claim as the friend, the guide, the higher Self, and describes himself as the Lord of all the worlds who is the friend of all creatures, *sarvalokamaheṣvaram suhr'idaṁ sarvabhūtānām* ; the two relations in fact must go together and neither can be perfect without the other. So too it is not the fatherhood of God as the Creator who demands obedience because he is the maker of our being, but the fatherhood of love which leads us towards the closer soul-union of Yoga. Love is the real key in both, and perfect love is inconsistent with the admission of the motive of fear. Closeness of the human soul to the Divine is the object, and fear sets always a barrier and a distance ; even awe and reverence for the divine Power are a sign of

distance and division and they disappear in the intimacy of the union of love. Moreover, fear belongs to the lower nature, to the lower self, and in approaching the higher Self must be put aside before we can enter into its presence.

This relation of the divine fatherhood and the closer relation with the Divine as the mother Soul of the universe have their springs in another early religious motive. One type of the Bhakta, says the Gita, is the devotee who comes to the Divine as the giver of his wants, the giver of his good, the satisfier of the needs of his inner and his outer being. "I bring to my bhakta" says the Lord "his getting and his having of good, *yogakshema vahāmyaham*." The life of man is a life of wants and needs and therefore of desires, not only in his physical and vital, but in his mental and spiritual being. When he becomes conscious of a greater Power governing the world, he approaches it through prayer for the fulfilment of his needs, for help in his rough journey, for protection and aid in his struggle. Whatever crudities there may be in the ordinary religious approach to God by prayer, and there are many, especially that attitude which imagines the Divine as if capable of being propitiated, bribed, flattered into acquiescence or indulgence by praise, entreaty and gifts and has often little regard to the spirit in which he is approached, still this way of turning to the Divine is an essential movement of our religious being and reposes on a universal truth.

The efficacy of prayer is often doubted and prayer itself supposed to be a thing irrational and necessarily superfluous and ineffective. It is true that the universal will executes always its aim and cannot be deflected by egoistic propitiation and entreaty, it is true of the Transcendent who expresses himself in the universal order that being omniscient his larger knowledge must foresee the thing to be done and it does not need direction or stimulation by human thought and that the individual's desires are not

and cannot be in any world-order the true determining factor. But neither is that order or the execution of the universal will altogether effected by mechanical Law, but by powers and forces of which for human life at least human will, aspiration and faith are not among the least important. Prayer is only a particular form given to that will, aspiration and faith. Its forms are very often crude and not only childlike, which is in itself no defect, but childish; but still it has a real power and significance. Its power and sense is to put the will, aspiration and faith of man into touch with the divine Will as that of a conscious Being with whom we can enter into conscious and living relations. For our will and aspiration can act either by our own strength and endeavour, which can no doubt be made a thing great and effective whether for lower or higher purposes,—and there are plenty of disciplines which put it forward as the one force to be used,—or it can act in dependence upon and with subordination to the divine or the universal Will. And this latter way again may either look upon that Will as responsive indeed to our aspiration, but almost mechanically, by a sort of law of energy, or at any rate quite impersonally, or else it may look upon it as responding consciously to the divine aspiration and faith of the human soul and consciously bringing to it the help, the guidance, the protection and fruition demanded, *yogakshema vahāmyaham*.

Prayer helps to prepare this relation for us at first on the lower plane even while it is there consistent with much that is mere egoism and self-delusion; but afterwards we can draw towards the spiritual truth which is behind it. It is not then the giving of the thing asked for that matters, but the relation itself, the contact of man's life with God, the conscious interchange. In spiritual matters and in the seeking of spiritual gains, this conscious relation is a great power; it is a much greater power than our own entirely self-reliant struggle and effort and it brings a fuller spiritual growth and experience. Necessarily in the end prayer either ceas-

es in the greater thing for which it prepared us,—in fact the form we call prayer is not itself essential so long as the faith, the will, the aspiration are there,—or remains only for the joy of the relation. Also its objects, the *artha* or interest it seeks to realise, become higher and higher until we reach the highest motiveless devotion, which is that of divine love pure and simple without any other demand or longing.

The relations which arise out of this attitude towards the Divine, are that of the divine Father and the Mother with the child and that of the divine Friend. To the Divine as these things the human soul comes for help, for protection, for guidance, for fruition,—or if knowledge be the aim, to the Guide, Teacher, Giver of light, for the Divine is the Sun of knowledge,—or it comes in pain and suffering for relief and solace and deliverance, it may be deliverance either from the suffering itself or from the world-existence which is the habitat of the suffering or from all its inner and real causes.* In these things we find there is a certain gradation. For the relation of fatherhood is always less close, intense, passionate, intimate, and therefore it is less resorted to in the Yoga which seeks for the closest union. That of the divine Friend is a thing sweeter and more intimate, admits of an equality and intimacy even in inequality and the beginning of mutual self-giving ; at its closest when all idea of other giving and taking disappears, when this relation becomes motiveless except for the one sole all-sufficing motive of love, it turns into the free and happy relation of the playmate in the Lila of existence. But closer and more intimate still is the relation of the Mother and the child, and that therefore plays a very large part wherever the religious impulse is most richly fervent and springs most warmly from the heart of man. The

* These are three of the four classes of devotee which are recognised by the Gita. *ârta*. *arthârthi*. *jñânâsu*, the distressed, the seeker of personal objects and the seeker of God-knowledge.

soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles and the divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.

But the highest and the greatest relation is that which starts from none of the ordinary religious motives, but is rather of the very essence of Yoga, springs from the very nature of love itself ; it is the passion of the Lover and the Beloved. Wherever there is the desire of the soul for its utter union with God, this form of the divine yearning makes its way even into religions which seem to do without it and give it no place in their ordinary system. Here the one thing asked for is love, the one thing feared is the loss of love, the one sorrow is the sorrow of separation of love ; for all other things either do not exist for the lover or come in only as incidents or as results and not as objects or conditions of love. All love is indeed in its nature self-existent because it springs from a secret oneness in being and a sense of that oneness or desire of oneness in the heart between souls that are yet able to conceive of themselves as different from each other and divided. Therefore all these other relations too can arrive at their self-existent motiveless joy of being for the sake of love alone. But still they start from and to the end they to some extent find a satisfaction of their play in other motives. But here the beginning is love and the end is love and the whole aim is love. There is indeed the desire of possession, but even this is overcome in the fullness of the self-existent love and the final demand of the Bhakta is simply that his bhakti may never cease nor diminish. He does not ask for heaven or for liberation from birth or for any other object, but only that his love may be eternal and absolute.

Love is a passion and it seeks for two things, eternity

and intensity, and in the relation of the Lover and Beloved the seeking for eternity and for intensity is instinctive and self-born. Love is a seeking for mutual possession, and it is here that the demand for mutual possession becomes absolute. Passing beyond desire of possession which means a difference, it is a seeking for oneness, and it is here that the idea of oneness, of two souls merging into each other and becoming one finds the acme of its longing and the utterness of its satisfaction. Love, too is a yearning for beauty, and it is here that the yearning is eternally satisfied in the vision and the touch and the joy of the All-beautiful. Love is a child and a seeker of Delight, and it is here that it finds the highest possible ecstasy both of the heart-consciousness and of every fibre of the being. Moreover, this relation is that which as between human being and human being demands the most and, even while reaching the greatest intensities, is still the least satisfied, because only in the Divine can it find its real and its utter satisfaction. Therefore it is here most that the turning of human emotion Godwards finds its full meaning and discovers all the truth of which love is the human symbol, all its essential instincts divinised, raised, satisfied in the bliss from which our life was born and towards which by oneness it returns in the Ananda of the divine existence where love is absolute, eternal and unalloyed.

The Psychology of Social Development

XXIII

A change of this kind, the change from the mental and vital to the spiritual order of life, must necessarily be first accomplished by the individual before we can think of its really laying any hold upon the community. The Spirit discovers, develops, builds into form in the individual man and through the individual offers the discovery and the chance of the new self-creation to the communal mind. For mark that the communal mind holds things subconsciously at first or, if consciously, then in a confused chaotic manner and that it is only through the individual mind that it can arrive at a clear knowledge and creation of the thing that it held in its subconscious self. Thinkers, historians, sociologists who belittle the individual and would like to lose him in the mass or think of him chiefly as a cell, an atom, have got hold only of the dark side of the truth of Nature's workings in mankind. It is because man is not like the material formations of Nature or like the animal that individuality is so much developed in him and so absolutely important and indispensable. No doubt what comes out in the individual and afterwards moves the mass, must have been there already in the mass and the individual is only an instrument for its

development ; but he is an indispensable instrument and an instrument not merely of the subconscious Nature, the instinctive urge which moves the mass, but more directly of the Spirit of whom that Nature is itself the instrument and the matrix of his creations. All great changes therefore find their first clear and effective power and their direct shaping force in the mind and spirit of an individual or of a limited number of individuals and the mass follows, but unfortunately in a very imperfect and confused fashion which often or even usually ends in the distortion of the thing created. If it were not so, mankind could have advanced on its way with a victorious rapidity instead of with the lumbering hesitations and soon exhausted rushes which are all of which it has yet been capable.

Therefore if the spiritual change of which we have been speaking is to be effected, it must unite two conditions which have to be simultaneously satisfied, the individual and the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to recreate themselves in the image of the Spirit and to communicate both their idea and their power to the mass, and the mass, the society, the communal mind which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, of following and effectively arriving, not by its own inherent deficiencies, its defect of preparation stopping or falling back before the decisive change is made. Such a simultaneity has never yet happened ; that it must happen some day is a certainty, but none can tell how many attempts will have to be made and how many sediments of spiritual experience will have to be accumulated in the subconscious mentality of the communal human being before the soil is ready. For the initiator himself may be imperfect, may not have waited to become entirely the thing that he has seen ; those who have the apostolate in their charge may not have perfectly assimilated and shaped it in themselves and may hand on the power of the Spirit still farther diminished to those who will come after them ; the

society may be intellectually, vitally, ethically, temperamentally unready, with the result that the final acceptance of the spiritual idea by the society may be also the beginning of its debasement and distortion and of the consequent departure or diminution of the Spirit. Any or all of these things may happen, and the result will be, as in the past, that even though some progress is made and an important change effected, it will not be the decisive change which can alone recreate humanity.

What then will be the state of society or of the common mind of man which will be most favourable to this change, so that even if it cannot at once effectuate itself, it may at least make for its ways a more decisive preparation than has been hitherto possible ? For that seems the most important element, since it is that, it is the unpreparedness, the unfitness of the society or of the common mind of man which is always the chief stumblingblock. Moreover, it is the state of this common mind which is of the first importance ; for even if the condition of society and the principle and rule that govern society are opposed to the spiritual change, even if these belong almost wholly to the vital, to the external, the economic, the mechanical order, as is certainly the way at present with human society, yet if the common human mind has begun to admit the ideas proper to the higher order that is in the end to be and the heart of man has begun to be stirred by aspirations born of these ideas, then there is hope of some advance in the not distant future. And here the first essential sign must be the growth of the subjective idea of life and the signals that are precursors of a subjective age in human thought and human society.

These ideas will first declare their trend in philosophy, in psychological thinking, in the arts, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, in the main idea of ethics, in the application of subjective principles by thinkers to questions of sociology, such as education, criminology, etc.,

even to politics and economics, and in new departures of science or at least of research,—since to such attempts the orthodox still deny the name of science,—attempts to extend it into the psychological and psychic realms with a realisation of the truth that these have laws of their own which are other than physical, finally, in a tendency in religion to reject its heavy weight of dead matter and re-vivify itself in the fountains of the spirit. These are sure signs, if not of the thing to be, at least of a great possibility of it, of an attempt that will surely be made, another endeavour perhaps with a larger sweep and a better equipped general intellectuality capable not only of feeling but of understanding the Truth that is demanding to be heard. Such signs we can see at the present time although they are only incipient and have not yet gone far enough. It is only when they have found that for which they are seeking, that they can be applied to the remoulding of society; for till then they will not be able to do more than conduct experiments of a doubtful kind with the details of its vast and cumbrous machinery.

A subjective age may stop very far short of spirituality. The search for the Reality, the true self of man, may very easily follow out the natural order described by the Upanishad in the story of Bhrigu, son of Varuna, who first found the reality to be the physical, the material being, the external man, afterwards the vital, in the third essay the mental being, before he got beyond the superficial subjective to the eternal reality of which these are the sheaths. And it may stop short anywhere; only if it is intended to discover, will the Spirit break each insufficient formula as soon as it has shaped itself and compel the thought of man to press forward to a larger discovery. After the material formula which governed the greater part of the nineteenth century and burdened mankind with the heaviest servitude to the machinery of life that he has ever yet been called upon to bear, the first attempt

to break through, to get to the living reality in things and away from the mechanical idea of life and living and society landed us in that vitalism which had already begun to govern thought before the two formulas inextricably locked together lit up and flung themselves on the lurid pyre of the world-war. It brought us no deliverance, but only used the machinery already created with a more feverish insistence in a vehement attempt to live more rapidly, more intensely, with a greater will to act and to succeed, to enlarge the mere force of living, to pile up a gigantic efficiency of life. To live, to act, to grow, to increase the vital force, to understand, utilise and fulfil the intuitive impulse of life are not things evil in themselves, rather they are excellent things, if rightly followed and rightly used, that is to say, if they are directed to something beyond the mere vitalistic impulse and are governed by that which is higher than Life. The Life-power is an instrument, the first great subjective instrument of the Spirit and the base of all action and endeavour. But Life seeing nothing beyond itself, nothing to be served beyond itself, will be very soon like the force of steam driving an engine without the driver, or an engine in which the locomotive force has made the driver its servant and not its controller. It can only give a Titanism, it may be even a demonism to the material life-force with the intellect as its servant, which will end in something violent, huge and Germanically "kolossal," that is to say, in excess and ruin.

Beyond this subjectivism of the vital self there is the possibility of a mental and psychic subjectivism which will at first no doubt, leaning upon the already realised idea of the soul as Life in action but correcting it, appear as a highly mentalised pragmatism, but may rise to the higher idea of man as a soul developing itself individually and collectively through the play of the ever-expanding mental existence. It would realise that the elevation of

the human existence will come not through material efficiency alone or the complex play of his vital and dynamic powers mastering through the aid of the intellect the energies of physical Nature for the satisfaction of the life-instincts, which can only be an intensification of his present mode of existence, but through the greatness of his mental and psychic being. It would see in life an opportunity for the joy and power of knowledge, for the joy and power of beauty, for the joy and power of the human will mastering not only physical Nature, but vital and mental Nature, discovering her secret powers, using them for a greater liberation of man from the limitations of his life, for new psychic relations, for a more sovereign power of the idea to realise itself in the act, for means of overcoming the obstacles of distance and division which would cast into insignificance the achievements of physical Science in that direction. Such a development is far enough away from even the dreams of the mass of men, but there are certain pale hints and presages of such a possibility and ideas which lead to it are already held by a great number of men who are perhaps in this respect the yet unrecognised vanguard of humanity.

Such a turn of human thought, effort, ideas of life, if it took hold of the communal mind, would evidently lead to a profound revolution throughout the whole range of human existence. It would give it from the first a new tone, a loftier spirit, a greater aim. It might easily develop a science which would bring the powers of the physical world into a real and not only a contingent and mechanical subjection and open perhaps the doors of other worlds. It might develop an achievement of Art and Beauty which would make the greatness of the past a comparatively little thing and would save the world from the astonishingly callous reign of utilitarian ugliness which is now afflicting it. It would open up a closer and freer interchange between human minds and, it may

well be hoped, a kindlier interchange between human hearts and human lives. Nor need its achievements stop here, but might proceed to greater things of which these would be only the beginnings. This mental and psychic subjectivism would have its dangers, greater dangers even than those that attend a vitalistic subjectivism, because its powers of action would also be greater, but it would have what vitalistic subjectivism has not and cannot easily have, great safeguards and a powerful liberating light.

Moving, as man does or is at least moving now, upward from matter to spirit, this is perhaps a necessary stage of development. One principal reason of the failure of past attempts to spiritualise mankind,—there are several others,—is that they endeavoured to spiritualise at once the material man by a sort of rapid miracle, and though that can be done, the miracle cannot be of an enduring character if it overleaps the stages of his ascent and leaves the intervening levels untrodden and therefore unmastered. The endeavour may succeed with individuals,—Indian thought would say with those who have made themselves ready in a past existence,—but it must fail with the mass. Not being able to go on dealing with them by the force of the spirit, it is obliged to try to save them by machinery and it becomes entangled within and is killed by its own machinery. That is the fate which overtakes all attempts of the vitalistic, the intellectual and mental, the spiritual endeavour to deal with material man through his physical mind alone or chiefly; the endeavour is overpowered by the machinery it creates and becomes the slave and victim of the machinery. That is the revenge which our material Nature, herself mechanical, takes upon all such violent endeavours; she waits to master them by their concessions to her own law. If mankind is to be spiritualised, it must in the mass cease to be the material or the vital man and become the psychic and the true mental being.

From that point of view it is an excellent thing, a

sign of great promise, that the wheel of civilisation has been following its past and present curve, that the human intellect has been first drawn to exhaust the possibilities of materialism by an immense dealing with life and the world upon the basis of taking Matter as the sole reality, Matter as the Eternal, Matter as the Brahman, *annam brahma*, that it has afterwards taken to the conception of existence as the large pulsation of a great evolving Life, the creator of Matter, and turned to deal with our existence,—but this attempt was only just beginning,—on the basis of taking Life as the original reality, Life as the great Eternal, *prāṇam brahma*, and that it has in germ, in preparation a conception which will be that of a great self-expressing and self-finding mind and mental soul and a rich attempt to deal with our existence on the basis of taking Mind as the original reality, the great Eternal, *mano brahma*. It is also a sign of great promise that these conceptions are succeeding or are likely to succeed each other with great rapidity ; for it shows that there is a readiness in our subconscious Nature and that we need not linger in each stage for centuries.

But it is only if in the third stage, that of the mental subjectivism the idea becomes strong of the mind itself only as a secondary term of the Spirit's working and of the Spirit as the great Eternal, the original and, in spite of the many terms in which it both hides and expresses itself, the sole reality, that the real, the decisive endeavour will begin, life and the world be studied, known, dealt with in all directions as the self-finding and self-expression of the Spirit and a spiritual age of mankind become a possibility. To attempt any adequate discussion of what that would mean, and in an inadequate discussion there is no fruit, would need another volume or two of essays, for we should have to examine a knowledge which is rare and nowhere more than initial. It is enough to say that a spiritual human society would start from and try to

realise three essential truths of existence which all Nature seems to be an attempt to hide by their opposites and which therefore are as yet for the mass of mankind only words and dreams, God, freedom, unity. Three things which are one, for you cannot realise freedom and unity unless you realise God, you cannot possess freedom and unity unless you possess God. The freedom and unity which otherwise go by that name, are simply attempts of our subjection and our division to get away from themselves by shutting their eyes while they turn somersaults around their own centre. When man is able to see God and to possess him, then he will know real freedom and arrive at real unity, never otherwise. And God is only waiting to be known, while man is seeking for him everywhere and creating images of him, but all the while finding and creating only images of his own ego. When this ego pivot is abandoned and this ego-hunt ceases, then man gets his first real chance of achieving spirituality.

A spiritualised society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego, but in the spirit, not as the collective ego, but as the collective soul. This freedom from the egoistic standpoint would be its first and most prominent characteristic ; but the elimination of egoism would not be brought about, as it is now proposed to bring it about, by making the individual immolate his personal will and aspirations and individuality to the collective will, aims and egoism of the society ; for that would be only the sacrifice of the smaller to the larger egoism, larger only in bulk, not necessarily greater in quality, wider or nobler, since the collective egoism, result of the united egoisms of all, is as little a god to be worshipped, as flawed and often an uglier and more barbarous idol than the egoism of the individual. What the spiritual man seeks is to find by the loss of the ego the self which is one in all and perfect and complete in each, and by living in that to grow into the image of its per-

fection, individually, be it noted, though with an all-embracing universality of his nature and its conscious circumference. It is said in the old Indian writings that while in the second age, the age of Power, Vishnu descends in the King, and in the third, the age of balance, as the legislator or codifier, in the age of the Truth he descends as Yajna, that is to say, as the Master of works manifest in the heart of his creatures. It is this kingdom of God within, the result of the finding of God not in a distant heaven but within ourselves, of which the state of society in an age of the Truth, a spiritual age, would be the result and the external figure.

Therefore a society which was even initially spiritualised, would make the revealing and finding of the divine Self in man the whole first aim of all its activities, its education, its knowledge, its science, its ethics, its art, its economical and political structure. As it was to some extent in the ancient Vedic times with the cultural education of the higher classes, so it would be then with all education. It would embrace all knowledge in its scope, but would make the whole trend and aim and the permeating spirit not mere worldly efficiency, but this self-developing and self-finding. It would pursue physical and psychical science not in order merely to know the world and Nature in her processes and to use them for material human ends, but to know through and in and behind all that God in the world and the ways of the Spirit in its masks and behind them. It would make it the aim of ethics not to establish a rule of action whether supplementary to or partially corrective of the social law, which is only the law, often clumsy and ignorant, of the pack, the herd, but to develop the divine nature in the human being. It would make it the aim of Art not merely to present images of the subjective and objective world, but to see with a vision that goes behind them and to reveal the Truth and Beauty of which they are the forms.

It would treat in its sociology the individual, from the saint to the criminal, not as units of a social problem to be passed through some skillfully devised machinery and either flattened into the social mould or crushed out of it, but as souls suffering and entangled in a net and to be saved, souls growing and to be encouraged to grow, souls grown and from whom help and power can be drawn. The aim of its economics would be not to create a huge engine of production, whether of the competitive or the cooperative kind, but to give men,—not only some but all men,—the joy of work according to their own nature and free leisure to grow inwardly, as well as a simply rich and beautiful life for all. And in its politics it would not regard the nations within themselves as enormous State machines with man living for the sake of the machine and worshipping it as his God and his larger self, content at the first call to kill others upon its altar and bleed there himself so that the machine may remain intact and powerful and be made ever larger, more complex and more cumbrous. Neither would it regard them in their mutual relations as noxious engines meant to discharge upon each other poisonous gas in peace and to rush in times of clash upon each other's hosts and unarmed peoples, full of armed men and belching shot like hostile tanks in a modern battle-field. It would regard them as group souls, God in his human collectivities, souls also meant like the individual to grow according to their own nature and by that growth to help each other to find this divine Self in the individual and the collectivity.

For it is the Divine within each man and each people that the man and the nation have to grow into and not an external idea or rule that has to be imposed on them from without ; therefore the law of freedom is that which will be most honoured in the spiritual age of mankind. True it is that so long as man has not come within

measurable distance of self-knowledge and has not set his face towards it, he cannot escape from the law of external compulsion and all his efforts to do so must be vain. He is then and always must be, so long as that lasts, the slave of others, the slave of his family, his caste, his clan, his church, his society, his nation ; and he cannot but be that and they too cannot help throwing their crude and mechanical compulsion on him, because he and they are the slaves of their own ego, of their own lower nature. We must feel and obey the compulsion of the Spirit if we would establish our inner right to escape other compulsion ; we must make our lower being the slave of the divine Being within us, for it is that subjection which is the condition of our freedom. But we have, even so, to remark that God respects the freedom of the natural members of our being and that he gives them room to grow in their own nature so that by natural growth and not by self-extinction they may find the Divine in themselves, and the subjection which they finally accept, complete and absolute, is a willing subjection of love to their own highest being. Therefore even in the unregenerated state we find that the healthiest, the truest, the most living growth and action is that which arises in the largest freedom and that all excess of compulsion is either the law of a gradual atrophy or a tyranny varied or cured by outbreaks of rabid disorder. And as soon as man comes to know his spiritual self or to seek it, he does by that, as ancient thought and religion saw, escape from the outer law and enter into the law of freedom.

A spiritual age of mankind will perceive this truth. It will not try to make man perfect by machinery or keep him straight by tying up all his limbs, nor will it present to the member of the society his higher self in the person of the policeman, the official and the corporal, which is said to be the German system but perhaps not entirely confined to Germany, nor, let us say, in the form of a

socialistic bureaucracy or a Labour Soviet. Its aim will be to diminish the element of external compulsion in human life by awakening the inner divine compulsion of the spirit within and all the preliminary means it will use will have that for its aim. In the end it will employ chiefly if not solely the spiritual compulsion which even the spiritual individual can exercise on those around him,—and how much more should a spiritual society be able to do it,—that which awakens within the desire and the power to grow through one's own nature into the Divine. For the perfectly spiritualised society will be one in which, as is dreamed by the spiritual anarchist, all men will be entirely free, and it will be so because the preliminary condition will have been satisfied. In that state each man will be not a law to himself, but *the* law, the divine Law, because he will be a soul living in the Divine and not an ego living mainly if not entirely for itself. His life will be led by the law of his own divine nature liberated from the ego.

Nor will that mean a breaking up of all human society into the isolated action of individuals; for the third word of the Spirit is unity. Each man has to grow into the Divine within himself through his own individual being, therefore is freedom a necessity of the being and perfect freedom the sign and the condition of the perfect life. But also, the Divine whom he thus sees in himself, he sees equally in all others, and as the same Spirit in all. Therefore too is a growing unity with others a necessity of his being and perfect unity the sign and condition of the perfect life. Not only to see and find God in oneself, but to see and find God in all, not only to seek one's own individual liberation or perfection, but to seek the liberation and perfection of others is the complete law of the spiritual being. If the divinity sought were a separate godhead within oneself and not God, or if one sought God for oneself alone, then indeed the result might be a grandiose

egoism, the Olympan egoism of a Goethe or the Titanic egoism imagined by Nietzsche, or it might be the isolated self-knowledge or asceticism of the ivory tower or the Stylites pillar. But he who sees God in all, will serve freely God in all with the service of love. He will, that is to say, seek not only his own freedom, but the freedom of all, not only his own perfection, but the perfection of all. He will not feel his individuality perfect except in the largest universality, nor his own life to be full life except as it is one with the universal life. He will not live either for himself or for the State and society, for the individual ego or the collective ego, but for something much greater, for God in himself and for God in humanity.

The spiritual age will be ready to set in when the common mind of man begins to be alive to these truths and to be moved or desire to be moved by this triple or triune Spirit. It will mean the turning of the cycle of social development which we have been considering towards its goal. For having set out, according to our supposition, with a symbolic age, an age in which it felt a great Reality behind all life which it sought through symbols, it will reach an age in which it will begin to live in that Reality, not through the symbol, not by the power of the type or of the convention or of the individual reason and intellectual will, but in our own highest nature which is the fulfilled nature of that Reality. And this is what the religions have seen with a more or less adequate intuition, but most often as in a glass darkly, that which they called, and which is again beginning to be called by some who see, the kingdom of God on earth,—within in the spirit, and therefore, for the one is the material result of the effectivity of the other, his kingdom without in the life of humanity.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXXIV

A religion of humanity may be either intellectual, that is to say, an intellectual and sentimental ideal, a living dogma with intellectual, psychological and practical effects, or else spiritual, partly the sign, partly the cause of a change of soul in humanity. The intellectual religion of humanity already to a certain extent exists, partly as a conscious creed in the minds of a few, partly as a potent shadow in the consciousness of the race, the shadow of a spirit that is yet unborn, but is preparing for its birth. This material world of ours, besides its fully embodied things of the present, is peopled by such powerful shadows, ghosts of things dead and ghosts of things yet unborn. The ghosts of things dead are very troublesome actualities and they now abound, ghosts of dead religions, dead arts, dead moralities, dead political theories, which still claim either to keep their rotting bodies or to animate partly the existing body of things, repeating their sacred formulas of the past with which they hypnotise the backward-looking minds and daunt even the progressive portion of humanity. But also there are these unborn spirits which are unable to take a definite body, but are already mind-born and exist as influences of which the human mind is aware and to which it now responds in a desultory and confused fashion. This was mind-born in

the eighteenth century, the *mānasa putra* * of the rationalist thinkers who brought it forward as a substitute for the formal spiritualism of ecclesiastical Christianity. It tried to give itself a body in Positivism, which was an attempt to formulate the dogmas of this religion, but on too heavily and severely rationalistic a basis even for acceptance by an Age of Reason. Humanitarianism has been its most prominent emotional result ; philanthropy, social service and other kindred activities have been its outward expression of good works ; democracy, socialism, pacifism are to a great extent its by-products or at least owe much of their vigour to its inner presence.

The fundamental idea is that mankind is the god-head to be worshipped and served by man and that the respect, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and the chief aim of the human spirit. No other idol, neither the nation, the State, the family nor anything else ought to take its place, they are only worthy of respect so far as they are images of the human spirit and enshrine its presence and aid its self-manifestation ; where the cult of these idols seeks to usurp the place of the spirit and makes demands inconsistent with its service, they should be put aside. No injunctions of old creeds, religious, political, social or cultural, are valid when they go against its claims. Science even, though it be one of the chief modern idols, must not be allowed to make claims contrary to its ethical temperament and aim, for science is only valuable in so far as it helps and serves by knowledge and progress the religion of humanity. War, capital punishment, the taking of human life, cruelty of all kinds whether committed by the individual, the State or society, not only physical cruelty, but moral cruelty, the degradation of any human

* Mind-born child, an idea and expression of Indian Puranic cosmology.

being or any class of human beings under whatever specious plea or in whatever interest, the oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, of nation by nation and all those habits of life and institutions of society of a similar kind which religion and ethics formerly tolerated or even favoured in practice, whatever they might do in their ideal rule or creed, are crimes against the religion of humanity, abominable to its ethical mind, forbidden by its primary tenets, to be fought against always, in no degree to be tolerated. Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventible death ; the life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted ; the heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation, freed from belittling influences ; the mind of man must be freed from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind. This, speaking largely, is the idea and spirit of the intellectual religion of humanity.

One has only to compare human life and thought and feeling a century or two ago with human life, thought and feeling now to see how great an influence this religion of humanity has exercised and how fruitful a work it has done. It has accomplished rapidly many things which orthodox religion failed to do effectively, largely because it has acted as a constant intellectual and critical solvent, an unsparing assailant of the thing that is and an unflinching champion of the thing to be, faithful always

to the future, while orthodox religion allied itself with the powers of the present, bound itself by its pact with them and could act only at best as a moderating but not as a reforming force. Moreover, this religion has faith in humanity and its earthly future, and can therefore aid its earthly progress while the orthodox religions looked with eyes of pious sorrow and gloom on the earthly life of man and were very ready to bid him bear peacefully and contentedly, even to welcome its crudities, cruelties, oppressions, tribulations as a means for learning to appreciate and earning the better life which will be given us hereafter. Faith, even an intellectual faith, must always be a worker of miracles, and this religion of humanity, even without taking bodily shape or a compelling form or a visible means of self-effectuation, has yet been able to effect comparatively much of what it set out to do. It has largely humanised society, humanised law and punishment, humanised the outlook of man on man, abolished legalised torture and the cruder forms of slavery, raised those who were depressed and fallen, given large hopes to humanity, stimulated philanthropy and charity and the service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom, put a curb on oppression and greatly minimised its more brutal expressions. It had almost succeeded in humanising war and would perhaps have succeeded entirely but for the contrary trend of modern science, and it has at least made it possible for man to conceive of a world free from war as possible, even without waiting for the Christian millennium, and at any rate this much change has come about that while peace was formerly a rare interlude of constant war, war is now an interlude, though a much too frequent interlude, of peace, though as yet only of an armed peace, and although that may not be a great step, still it is a step forward. It has given new conceptions of the dignity of the human being and opened new ideas and new vistas of his education, self-

development and potentiality. It has spread enlightenment, made man feel more his responsibility for the progress and happiness of the race and raised the average self-respect and capacity of mankind ; it has given hope to the serf, self-assertion to the down-trodden and made the labourer in his manhood the potential equal of the rich and the powerful. True, if we compare what is with what should be, the actual achievement with the ideal, all this will seem only a scanty work of preparation ; but still it is a remarkable record for a century and a half or little more and for an unembodied spirit which has had to work through what instruments it can find and has as yet no form, habitation or visible engine of its own concentrated workings. But perhaps it was in this that lay its power and advantage, since that saved it from crystallising into form and getting petrified or at least losing its more free and subtle working.

But still in order to accomplish all its future this idea and religion of humanity has to make itself more explicit, insistent and categorically imperative. For otherwise it can only work with clarity in the minds of the few and with the mass it will be only a modifying influence, but will not be the rule of human life. And so long as that is so, it cannot entirely prevail over its own principal enemy. That enemy, the enemy of all real religion, is human egoism, the egoism of the individual, the egoism of class and nation. These it may at present soften, modify, force to curb their more arrogant, open and brutal expressions, oblige to adopt better institutions, but not to give place to the love of mankind, not to recognise a real unity between man and man. For that essentially must be the aim of the religion of humanity, as it must be the earthly aim of all religion, love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood, a living sense of human oneness and practice of human oneness in thought, feeling and life, the ideal which was expressed first some thousands of years ago in the ancient

Vedic hymn and must always remain the highest injunction of the Spirit within us to human life upon earth. Till that is brought about, the religion of humanity remains unaccomplished. With that done, the one necessary psychological change will have been effected without which no formal and mechanical, no political and administrative unity can be real and secure. And if it is done, that outward unification may not even be indispensable or, if indispensable, it will come about naturally, not, as now it seems likely to be, by catastrophic means, but by the demand of the human mind, and will be held secure by an essential need of our perfected and developed human nature.

But this is the question whether a purely intellectual and sentimental religion of humanity will be sufficient to bring about so great a change in our psychology. The weakness of the intellectual idea, even when it supports itself by an appeal to the sentiments and emotions, is that it does not get at the centre of man's being. The intellect and the feelings are only instruments of the being, and they may be the instruments of either its lower and external form or of the inner and higher man, servants of the ego or channels of the soul. The aim of the religion of humanity was formulated in the eighteenth century by a sort of primal intuition ; that aim was and it is still to recreate human society in the image of three great kindred ideas, liberty, equality and fraternity. None of these has really been won in spite of all the progress that has been achieved. The liberty that is so much proclaimed as an essential of modern progress, is an outward and mechanical liberty ; the equality that is now so much sought after and battled for, is equally an outward and mechanical equality ; fraternity is not even claimed to be a practicable principle of the ordering of life and what is put forward as its substitute is the outward and mechanical principle of equal association or at the best a comradeship of

labour. This is because the idea of humanity has been obliged in an intellectual age to mask its true character of a religion and a thing of the soul and the spirit and to appeal to the vital and physical mind of man rather than his inner being. It has limited its effort to the attempt to revolutionise political and social institutions and to bring about such a modification of the ideas and sentiments of the common mind of mankind as would make these institutions practicable ; it has worked at the machinery of human life and on the outer mind much more than upon the soul of the race. It has laboured to establish a political and social liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association.

But though these aims are of great importance in their own field, they are not the central thing ; they can only be secure when founded upon a change of the inner human nature and inner way of living ; they are themselves of importance only as means for giving a greater scope and a better field for man's development towards that change and, when it is once achieved, as outward expressions of the larger inward life. Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul ; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at individualism ; when it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully, it constructs an artificial and machine-made society. A society that pursues liberty as its ideal, is unable to achieve equality ; a society that aims at equality, will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity, is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature. All that it knows, is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends, and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of

labour, production, consumption and enjoyment.

Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul, and by the soul, it can exist by nothing else ; for this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being ; when it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings ; and when it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul ; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race.

The Future Poetry

THE CHARACTER OF ENGLISH POETRY

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Of all the modern European tongues the English language, I think it may be said without serious doubt, has produced the most rich and naturally powerful poetry, the most lavish of energy and innate genius. The unfettered play of poetic energy and power has been here the most abundant and brought forth the most constantly brilliant fruits. And yet it is curious to note that English poetry and literature have been a far less effective force in the shaping of European culture than those of other tongues inferior actually in natural poetic and creative energy. At least they have had to wait till quite a recent date before they produced any potent effect and even then their direct influence was limited.

A glance will show how considerable has been this limitation. The poetic mind of Greece and Rome has pervaded and largely shaped the whole artistic production of Europe, Italian poetry of the great age has thrown on some part of it at least a stamp only less profound, French prose and poetry,—but the latter in a much less degree,—have helped more than any other literary influence to form the modern turn of the European mind and its

mode of expression, the shortlived outbursts of creative power in the Spain of Calderon and the Germany of Goethe exercised an immediate, a strong, though not an enduring influence, and the newly created Russian literature has been, though more subtly, among the most intense of recent cultural forces. But if we leave aside Richardson and Scott in fiction and in poetry the very considerable effects of the belated continental discovery of Shakespeare and the vehement and sudden wave of the Byronic influence, which did much to enforce the note of revolt and of a half sentimental, half sensual pessimism which is even now one of the strongest shades in the literary tone of modern Europe,—to the present day Shakespeare and Byron are the only two great names of English poetry which are generally familiar on the continent and have had a real vogue,—we find the literature of the English tongue and especially its poetry flowing in a large side-stream, always receiving much from the central body of European culture but returning upon it very little. This insularity, not of reception but of reaction, is a marked phenomenon and calls for explanation.

If we look for the causes,—for such a paucity of influence cannot, certainly, be put down to any perversity or obtuseness in the general mind of Europe, but must be due to some insufficiency or serious defect in the literature itself,—we shall find, I think, if we look with other than English-trained eyes, that there is even in this rich and vigorous poetry abundant cause for the failure. English poetry is powerful but it is imperfect, strong in spirit, but uncertain and tentative in form; it is extraordinarily stimulating, but not often quite satisfying. It aims high, but its success is not as great as its effort. Especially its imaginative force exceeds its thought-power; it has indeed been hardly at all a really great instrument of poetic thought-vision; it has not dealt fruitfully with life. Its history has been more that of individual poetic ach-

ievements than of a constant national tradition ; in the mass it has been a series of poetical revolutions without any strong inner continuity. That is to say that it has had no great self-recognising idea or view of life expressing the spiritual attitude of the nation and finding successfully from an early time its own sufficient artistic forms. But it is precisely the possession of such a self-recognizing spiritual attitude and the attainment of a satisfying artistic form for it which make the poetry of a nation a power in the world's general culture. For that which recognises its self, will most readily be recognised by others ; that which attains the perfect form of its own innate character, will most effectively leave its stamp in the formation of the mind of humanity.

We have only to take one or two examples to see the whole difference. No poetry has had so powerful an influence as Greek poetry ; no poetry is, I think, within its own limits so perfect and satisfying. The limits indeed are marked and even, judged by the undulating many-sidedness and wideness of the modern mind, narrow ; but on its own lines this poetry works with a flawless power and sufficiency. From beginning to end it dealt with life from one large view-point, that of the inspired reason and the enlightened and chastened aesthetic sense ; whatever changes overtook it, it never departed from this motive which is of the very essence of the Greek spirit. And of this motive it was very conscious and by its clear recognition of it and fidelity to it it was able to achieve an artistic beauty and sufficiency of expressive form which affect us like an easily accomplished miracle and which have been the admiration of after ages. Even the poetry of the Greek decadence preserved enough of this power to act as a shaping influence on Latin poetry.

French poetry is much more limited than the Greek, much less powerful in inspiration. For it deals with life from the standpoint not of the inspired reason, but of the

clear-thinking intellect, not of the enlightened aesthetic sense, but of emotional sentiment. These are its two constant powers ; the one gives it its brain-stuff, the other its poetical fervour and appeal. Throughout all the changes of the last century, in spite of apparent cultural revolutions, the French spirit has remained in its poetry faithful to these two motives which are of its very essence, and therefore too it has always or almost always found its satisfying and characteristic form. To that combination of a clear and strong motive and a satisfying form it owes the influence it has exercised from time to time on other European literatures. The cultural power of the poetry of other tongues may be traced to similar causes. But what has been the spirit and form of English poetry ? Certainly, there is an English spirit which could not fail to be reflected in its poetry ; but, not being clearly self-conscious, it is reflected obscurely and confusedly, and it has been at war within itself, followed a fluctuation of different motives and never succeeded in bringing about between them a conciliation and fusion. Therefore its form has suffered ; it has had indeed no native and characteristic principle of form which would be, through all changes, the outward reflection of a clear self-recognising spirit.

The poetry of a nation is only one side of its self-expression and its characteristics may be best understood if we look at it in relation to the whole mental and dynamic effort of the people. If we so look at the general contribution of the English nation to human life and culture, the eye is arrested by some remarkable lacunae. These are especially profound in the arts : English music is a zero, English sculpture an unfilled void, English architecture hardly better ; English painting, illustrated by a few great names, has been neither a great artistic tradition nor a powerful cultural force and merits only a casual mention by the side of the rich achievement of

Italy, Spain, France, Holland, Belgium. When we come to the field of thought we get a mixed impression like that of great mountain eminences towering out of a very low and flat plain. We find great individual philosophers, but no great philosophical tradition, two or three remarkable thinkers, but no high fame for thinking, many of the most famous names in science, but no national scientific culture. Still in these fields there has been remarkable accomplishment and the influence on European thought has been occasionally considerable and sometimes capital. But when finally we turn to the business of practical life, there is an unqualified preeminence : in mechanical science and invention, in politics, in commerce and industry, in colonisation, travel, exploration, in the domination of earth and the exploitation of its riches England has been till late largely, sometimes entirely the world's leader, the shaper of its motives and the creator of its forms.

This peculiar distribution of the national capacities finds its root in certain racial characteristics. We have first the dominant Anglo-Saxon strain quickened, lightened and given force, power and initiative by the Scandinavian and Celtic elements. This mixture has made a national mind remarkably dynamic and practical, with all the Teutonic strength, patience, industry, but liberated from the Teutonic heaviness and crudity, yet retaining enough not to be too light of balance or too sensitive to the shocks of life ; therefore, a nation easily first in practical intelligence and practical dealing with the facts and difficulties of life. Not, be it noted, by any power of clear intellectual thought or by force of imagination or intellectual intuition, but rather by a strong vital instinct, a sort of tentative dynamic intuition. No spirituality, but a robust ethical turn ; no innate power of the word, but a strong turn for action ; no fine play of emotion or quickness of sympathy, but an abundant energy and force of will.

This is one element of the national mind ; the other is the submerged, half-insistent Celtic, gifted with precisely the opposite qualities, inherent spirituality, the gift of the word, the rapid and brilliant imagination, the quick and luminous intelligence, the strong emotional force and sympathy, the natural love of the things of the mind and still more of those beyond the mind, left to it from an old forgotten culture in its blood which contained an ancient mystical tradition. In life a subordinate element, modifying the cruder Anglo-Saxon characteristics, breaking across them or correcting their excess, we may perhaps see it emerging in English poetry, coming repeatedly to the surface and then working with a certain force and vehement but embarrassed power like an imprisoned spirit let out for a holiday, but within not quite congenial bounds and with an unadaptable companion. From the ferment of these two elements arise both the greatness and the limitations of English poetry.

A. G.

NOTICE.

“ Arya ” begins its fifth year with the 15 th August 1918. We request our subscribers to send by money order the sum of Rs. 6 as subscription for the new year. In the absence of any direction to the contrary or of subscription by money order within the 10 th August, we shall send the August number as usual and realise the amount of Rs. 6 by V. P. P.

SECRETARY,

“ARYA”



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A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th July 1918

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The Life Divine

CHAPTER XLVII

REBIRTH AND THE OTHER WORLDS

If the physical universe were the only or the whole manifestation of the infinite Reality, what we would then have to suppose, is that all the principles of its being from Matter to Spirit are entirely involved in the apparently inconscient Force which is the basis of the first workings of this universe, and that they are being evolved by it here completely and here solely, without any other aid or pressure except that of the secret Superconscience within it. Such an order of the world is theoretically possible. But it is evident that such an order is not the only one possible. For it is an order in which the principle of Matter must always remain the first and principal condition. Spirit might indeed in the end arrive at its natural domination to a certain extent ; it might make its basis of physical matter a more elastic instrument not prohibitive of the action of its own highest law and nature or opposed to that action, as it now is in its inelastic resistance. But Spirit would always then be dependent upon Matter for its field and its manifestation ; it could have no other field ; it could not get outside it to another kind of manifestation ; and within it also it could not very well arrive at any other than the material foundation and determinant of its manifestation.

But, given the fact that the infinite Reality is free in the play of its consciousness, it is not bound to involve itself in the nescience of Matter before it can at all manifest. It must be possible for it to manifest just the contrary order of things, one in which the unity of spiritual being is the matrix and first condition of things and all its names and forms are the self-conscious play of that unity. Or it might be an order in which its power of conscious Will realising freely and directly its own possibilities in itself and not, as here, through the restricting medium of the Life-Force in matter would be at once the first principle of manifestation and the object of all its free and blissful action. It might be an order, again, in which the free play of an infinite mutual self-delight in a multiplicity of beings conscious not only of their eternal but of their present unity would be the object, and in a such a system the action of the principle of self-existent Bliss would be the first principle and the universal condition. Again it might be a world-order in which the Supermind would be the dominant principle from the beginning; and then the nature of the manifestation would be a multiplicity of beings finding through the free and luminous play of their divine individuality all the joy of their difference in unity.

Nor need the series stop here; for we observe that with us Mind is hampered by Life in Matter and finds all the difficulty possible in dominating them and that Life itself is similarly restricted by the mortality, the inertia and the instability of Matter; but evidently there might be a world-order in which neither of these two disabilities formed part of the first conditions of existence. There is the possibility of a world in which Mind would be from the first dominant, free to work upon Matter as a quite plastic material, where Matter would be quite evidently the result of the universal Mind-force working itself out in life. It is that even here in reality; but here the Mind-

force is involved from the beginning, subconscious and not in free possession of itself, but subject to its encasing material, while there it would be in possession of itself and master of its material, which would be much more subtle and elastic than in a predominantly physical universe. So too Life might have its own world-order where it was king, able to deploy its own more elastic and freely variable desires and tendencies without being menaced at every moment by disintegration and therefore occupied chiefly with the care of self-preservation and restricted in its play by this state of precarious tension which limits its instincts of free formation, free self-gratification and free adventure. The separate dominance of each principle of being is an eternal possibility in the manifestation of being,—given always that they are principles distinct in their dynamic power and mode of working, even though one in original substance.

Nor is this only a philosophical possibility, or a potentiality in the being of Sachchidananda which it never realises, or has not yet realised, or, if realised, has not brought within the scope of the consciousness of beings living in the physical universe. For all our spiritual and psychic experience bears affirmative witness, brings us always a constant and, in its main principles, an invariable evidence of the existence of such higher worlds, such freer planes of existence. Not having bound ourselves down, like modern European thought,—some of its latest developments excepted,—to the dogma that only physical experience or experience based upon the physical senses is true, the analysis of physical experience by the reason alone verifiable, and all else error, self-delusion and hallucination, we are bound to accept this evidence and to admit the existence of these planes. We see that they are, practically, different harmonies from the harmony of the physical universe. They occupy, as the word plane suggests, a different level in the scale of being as well as

adopt a different system and ordering of its principles.

We need not inquire, for our present purpose, whether they coincide in time and space with our own world or move in a different field of space and in another stream of time,—in either case it is in a more subtle substance and with other movements. All we have to ask now is whether they are different universes, each complete in itself and in no way meeting with, intercrossing or affecting the others, or are simply different scales of one graded and interwoven system of being, parts therefore of one complex universal system. The fact that they can enter into the field of our mental consciousness, would naturally suggest the validity of the second alternative, but it would not by itself be conclusive. But what we find is that these higher planes are actually at every moment acting upon and in communication with our own plane of being, although that action is naturally not present to our ordinary waking or outer consciousness, because that is ordinarily limited to the reception of the contacts of the physical world : but the moment we either go back into our subliminal being or enlarge our waking consciousness beyond the scope of the physical contacts, we become aware of all this higher action. We find even that the human being can project himself partially into these higher planes under certain conditions, even while in the body, *a fortiori* must be able to do it when out of the body, and to do it then completely, since there is no longer the disabling condition of the physical life bound down to the body. The consequences of this relation and this power of transference are of immense importance, for they immediately justify, at any rate as an actual possibility, the ancient tradition of at least a temporary sojourn of the human conscious being in other worlds than the physical after the dissolution of the physical body.

But we have further to consider the question whether these worlds are subsequent in order to the physical

or prior to it,—not in time, so much as in consequential sequence,—and this we have already decided in the sense of the second possibility. In other words, the higher worlds have not come into being by a pressure from the lower physical universe,—let us say, from Sachchidananda in the physical inconscience, or else by the urge of his being as it emerges from the inconscience into life and mind and spirit and experiences the necessity of creating worlds or planes in which those principles shall have a freer play and in which the human soul may strengthen its vital, mental or spiritual tendencies. Still less are they the creations of the human soul itself, whether its dreams or the result of the constant self-projections of mankind in its dynamic and creative being beyond the limits of the physical consciousness. The only thing that man creates in this direction is, we have said, the reflex images of these planes in his own embodied consciousness and the fitness of his own soul to respond to them, to become aware of them, to participate consciously in the interweaving of their influences with the action of the physical plane. He does indeed contribute the results or projections of his own higher vital and mental action to the action of these planes; but these projections are after all only a sort of return of the higher planes upon themselves, a return from the earth of their powers which have come down from them to the earth-mind, since this higher vital and mental action is itself the result of influences transmitted from above. It is possible also that he creates a certain kind of annexe to these higher planes, or at least to the lower of them, environments of a half-unreal character which are rather self-created envelopes of his conscious mind and life than real worlds; they are the reflections of his own being, an artificial environment corresponding to his attempt during life to image these other worlds,—heavens and hells projected by the image-creating faculty in his human power of conscious being. But neither of these two

things at all means a total creation of a real plane of being founded on its own separate principle of conscious action.

These planes are, then, systems coeval and coexistent with that which presents itself to us as the physical universe. We have gone even so far as to conclude that the development of life, mind and spirit in the physical being presupposes their existence ; for these powers are developed here by two cooperating forces, an upward-tending force from below, an upward-drawing force from above, the necessity in the Inconscient of bringing out what is latent within it and the pressure of the superior principles in the higher planes which not only aids this general necessity to realise itself, but very largely determines the special ways in which it is eventually realised. It is this upward-drawing action, this insistence from above which explains the constant influence of the spiritual, mental and vital worlds upon the physical plane. And it is surely evident that, given a complex universe and seven principles interwoven in every part of its system and naturally therefore drawn to act upon and respond to each other wherever they can at all get at one another, such an action, such a constant pressure and influence is an inevitable consequence, must be inherent in the very nature of the manifestation.

These are the conditions under which we must consider the farther development of the system of rebirth, a system which we have seen to be itself an inevitable consequence of the original nature of the manifestation. If the physical universe were the sole manifested world, or if it were not the sole, but still a quite separate world, there would be no room, obviously, for a life on other planes after death and before the subsequent rebirth. But we see that these other planes do coexist, are part of one complex system, act constantly upon the physical which is, so far at least as we are concerned, their own final and

lowest term, and even receive in a sense reactions from it. We see too that man can become conscious of these planes and can project too his conscious being into them, partly in life, presumably therefore with a full completeness after the dissolution of the body. Such a possibility then becomes sufficiently actual to necessitate practically its own realisation, immediate and perhaps invariable if man is from the beginning endowed with such a power of self-transference, eventual if he only arrives at it by a gradual progression. And here the popular ideas deriving from the religions which admit reincarnation, present an inconsistency which, after the manner of popular beliefs, they are at no pains to reconcile. On the one hand there is the idea, vague enough but fairly general, that death is followed immediately or with something like immediateness by the assumption of another body. On the other hand, there is the old religious dogma of a life after death in hells and heavens or at any rate in other worlds, which the soul has acquired by its merits or demerits in this existence, the return to earth intervening only when that merit and demerit are exhausted and the being is ready for another human existence. Leaving the definite determination of the possibility or prevalence of immediate rebirth,—there are both older and later theories which deny it altogether or almost entirely,—to the farther development of psychical knowledge, we may consider whether there is in the nature of things any apparent or pressing necessity for either movement and how far it extends.

A sort of half-necessity for the life in other worlds, a dynamic and practical rather than an essential necessity, arises from the very fact of the principles being interwoven with each other and in a way dependent upon each other and from the effect that this fact must have upon the process of our spiritual evolution. We have come so far as the birth of the ascending soul into the human form and its repeated rebirth in that form, without

which it cannot complete its human evolution ; for one brief human life upon earth is evidently insufficient for that purpose. Now there is a certain possibility at first of a repeated immediate transmigration, as it used once to be called,—that is to say, in more philosophical language, the repeated assumption of a new human form in a fresh birth immediately the previous body has been dissolved by the cessation of the organised life-energy and the physical disintegration which we call death. But what is it that would compel such a series of immediate rebirths ? Evidently it could only be imperative so long as the mental individuality was insufficiently developed, so insufficiently that it could not abide except by dependence upon the vital and physical individuality. It is doubtful whether we should be justified in attributing any such entirely insufficient development to an individual conscious being that has got so far as the human consciousness. Even at his lowest the human individual is still a distinctly mental being, however limited his mind may be, however engrossed with the physical and vital soul and unable or unwilling to detach itself from these lower formations. Yet we may suppose this downward attachment to be so strong as to compel the mental being to hasten at once to a resumption of the physical life because it is not really fit for anything else or at home on any higher plane. Let us grant, at least as a reasonable hypothesis from the facts, that this happens. Still, as it develops, it must get the power and therefore the will,—for will and power are one,—to persist apart from this mental and physical attachment to the physical life and the body, to persist in the subtle body which we know to be the characteristic case or sheath and the proper physical foundation of the mental being. That means a dwelling for some time between two births somewhere else than on the entirely material plane in which we now move. Where then would that temporary dwelling in the

supraphysical take place ? what would be its habitat ? It would seem that it ought to be on the mental plane, in the mental worlds, both because on the mental being the attraction of its own plane, already active in life, must prevail when there is not the obstacle of the attachment to the body, and because the mental plane is evidently the native and proper habitat of the mental being.

But here certain intervening obstacles may come in which would either prevent or delay this consummation. First, we have some reason to believe that in the system of the physical plane itself there are layers of greater and greater subtlety which may be viewed as sub-planes of a vital and a mental character through which the interchange between the higher worlds and the physical takes place. If that be correct, then it may also be possible for the mental being, even though attracted naturally towards his own proper habitat, to be delayed in this medium and even, though less probably, to rest there entirely between birth and birth. But this could only happen if and in so far as his mental attachment to the earth-forms of his mental activity was so great as to preclude or hamper the completion of his natural upward movement. Again, the post-mortal state of the soul must naturally correspond in some way to the development of the mental being on earth ; for this after life is not a free upward return after a temporary downward deviation into mortality, but a circumstance of the process of the spiritual evolution in the physical existence. The relation which in this evolution the mental being on earth develops with the higher planes, must have an effect on his internatal dwelling in these planes. We know that he creates images of these planes which are often mental translations of certain elements in them, a system constructed by him into actual worlds, and it is possible that these constructions may be so strong as to create for him an artificial post-mortal environment in which he may linger. For

the image-making power of the human mind, its imagination, which is in his physical life only an indispensable aid to his acquisition of knowledge and his life-creation, may in a higher scale become a creative force which would enable the mental being to live for a while amid its own images until they were dissolved. These are largely vital constructions in which he applies some of the conditions of the higher mental and vital worlds to his physical experience; he translates the vital joy and vital suffering of the physical being into supraphysical conditions and gives them a greater scope, fullness and endurance. They must therefore be considered, so far as they have any supra-physical habitat, as annexes of the vital or at most of the lower mental planes. But even in the true vital worlds,—distinguished from these by being not human constructions, but developments of the universal life-principle acting in its own nature,—he may be held by the predominantly vital character of the influences which have shaped his earthly existence. He may be held in the grasp of that which held him in its grasp even in the physical being. But eventually he must arrive at the mental planes which are his proper habitation, and for the man who has not gone beyond the mental rung in the ladder of being this would be his highest internatal existence.

All this is, however, a matter of dynamic probability, and that, though often amounting in practice to a necessity, is still not in itself quite conclusive. We have to ask whether there is any more essential necessity for these internatal intervals, or at least any of so great a dynamic power as to lead to an irresistible conclusion. We shall find one in the decisive part played by the higher planes in the earth-evolution and the relation to them of the evolving soul-consciousness. Our development takes place by their action upon the earth-soul. All is contained in the inconscient or the subconscious, but in potentiality;

it is the action from above that both helps to compel its emergence and is necessary to shape and determine the progression of the mental and vital forms that it takes. These progressive movements cannot find their full momentum or sufficiently develop their implications against the resistance of the material nature except by a constant resort to the higher forces. This resort takes place in our subliminal being. It is from there that the active power of our consciousness emerges, and all that it realises it sends back constantly into the subliminal being to be stored up, developed and reemerge in stronger forms. That interaction is the main secret of the rapid development that takes place in man once he has passed beyond the lower stages of mind immersed in Matter. This resort must continue in the internatal stage ; for the new life is not a taking up of the development exactly where it stopped in the last ; but rather an assimilation, a discarding and strengthening and rearrangement of motives must take place, a new ordering of the development of the past without which the new start cannot be made. For each birth is a new start, developing indeed from the past, but not its mechanical continuation. This internatal resort can only take place on the planes proper to the motives that are to be developed and manipulated, those which are themselves of that nature and whose influence is necessary for this evolution. The terrestrial development of the materials so prepared, their working out in the earth life is the object, and for that the new birth is the field of activity.

For when we say that the soul on earth evolves successively the physical, the vital, the mental, the spiritual being, we do not mean that it creates them where they had no previous existence. On the contrary, what it does is to manifest them under the conditions of the physical manifestation. In fact we must accept the ancient idea that man has within him not only the physical soul or

Purusha with its appropriate nature, but a vital, a mental, a supramental, a spiritual ; * and either the whole or the greater part of them is concealed in his subliminal and his superconscious being. He has to bring forward their powers in his active consciousness and to awake to them in its knowledge. But each of these is in relation with its own proper plane of being and all have their roots in them. Through them takes place the subliminal resort of the being to the shaping influences from above, a resort which may become more and more conscious as we develop ; and according to the development of this power in our conscious evolution will be the necessary internal resort which this nature of our being and our birth necessitates. The circumstances and the stages of that internal resort must necessarily be complex and not of the crudely and trenchantly simple character which the popular religions would suggest. But in itself it is an inevitable consequence of the nature of the soul-life in the body.

Thus the evolution of the conscious being by the interchange between an ascending series of planes and principles brings us to these two necessities, a series of rebirths in the human life and between them an internal life on other planes which aid the process of which rebirth is the machinery. We have to see finally where this leads, what is the will in it all and the last spiritual eventuality and consummation.

Essays on the Gita

THE GIST OF THE KARMAYOGA

The first six chapters of the Gita form a sort of preliminary block of the teaching ; all the rest, all the other twelve chapters are the working out of certain unfinished figures in this block which here are seen only as hints behind the large-size execution of the main motives, yet are in themselves of capital importance and are therefore reserved for a yet larger treatment on the other two faces of the work. Were the Gita not a great written scripture which must be carried to its end, were it actually a discourse by a living teacher to a disciple which could be resumed in good time, when the disciple was ready for further truth, one could conceive of his stopping here at the end of the sixth chapter and saying, "Work this out first, there is plenty for you to do to realise it and you have the largest possible basis ; as difficulties arise, they will solve themselves or I will solve them for you. But at present live out what I have told you ; work in this spirit." True, there are many things here which cannot be properly understood except in the light thrown on them by what is to come after, so much so that in order to clear up immediate difficulties and obviate possible misunderstandings, we have had ourselves to anticipate, to bring in repeatedly, for example, the idea of the Purushottama which is necessary to clear

up the obscurities about the Self and action and the Lord of action.

Arjuna, himself, if the Teacher were to break off his discourse here, might well object ; "You have spoken much of the destruction of desire and attachment, of equality, of the conquest of the senses and the stilling of the mind, of passionless and impersonal action, of the sacrifice of works, of the inner as preferable to the outer renunciation, and these things I understand intellectually, however difficult they may appear to me in practice. But you have also spoken of rising above the *gunas*, while yet one remains in action, and you have not told me how the *gunas* work, and unless I know that, it will be difficult for me to detect and rise above them. Besides, you have spoken of *bhakti* as the greatest element in Yoga, yet you have talked much of works and knowledge, but very little or nothing of *bhakti*. And to whom is *bhakti*, this greatest thing, to be offered ? Not to the still impersonal Self, certainly, but to you, the Lord. Tell me, then, what you are, who, as *bhakti* is greater even than this self-knowledge, are greater than the immutable Self, which is itself greater than mutable Nature and the world of action, even as knowledge is greater than works. What is the relation between these three things ? between works and knowledge and divine love ? between the soul in Nature and the immutable Self and that which is at once the Self of all and the Master of knowledge and love and works, the supreme Divinity who is here with me in this great battle and massacre, my charioteer in the chariot of this fierce and terrible action." It is to answer these questions that the rest of the Gita is written, and in a complete intellectual solution they have indeed to be taken up without delay and resolved. But in actual *sâdhana* one has to advance from stage to stage, leaving many things, indeed the greatest things to arise subsequently and solve themselves fully by the light of the advance we have made in

spiritual experience. The Gita follows to a certain extent this curve of experience and puts first a sort of large preliminary basis of works and knowledge which contains an element leading up to bhakti and to a greater knowledge, but not yet fully arriving. The six chapters present us with that basis.

We may then pause to consider how far they have carried the solution of the original problem with which the Gita started. The problem in itself, it may be useful again to remark, need not necessarily have led up to the whole question of the nature of existence and of the replacement of the normal by the spiritual life. It might have been dealt with on a pragmatistical or an ethical basis or from an intellectual or an ideal standpoint or by a consideration of all of these together ; that in fact would have been our modern method of solving the difficulty. By itself it raises in the first instance just this question, whether Arjuna should be governed by the ethical sense of personal sin in slaughter or by the consideration equally ethical of his public and social duty, the defence of the Right, the opposition demanded by conscience from all noble natures to the armed forces of injustice and oppression ? That question has been raised in our own time and the present hour, and it can be solved, as we solve it now, by one or other of very various solutions, but all from the standpoint of our normal life and our normal human mind. It may be answered as a question between the personal conscience and our duty to the society and the State, between an ideal and a practical morality, between "soul-force" and the recognition of the troublesome fact that life is not yet at least all soul and that to take up arms for the right in a physical struggle is sometimes inevitable. All these solutions are, however, intellectual, temperamental, emotional ; they depend upon the individual standpoint and are at the best our own proper way of meeting the difficulty offered to us,

proper because suitable to our nature and the stage of our ethical and intellectual evolution, the best we can, with the light we have, see and do ; it leads to no final solution. And this is so, because it proceeds from the normal mind which is always a tangle of various tendencies of our being and can only arrive at a choice or an accommodation between them, between our reason, our ethical being, our dynamic needs, our life-instincts, our emotional being and those rarer movements which we may perhaps call soul-instincts or psychical preferences. The Gita recognises that from this standpoint there can be no absolute solution and, after offering to Arjuna from the highest ideals of his age just such a practical solution, which he is in no mood to accept and indeed is evidently not intended to accept, it proceeds to quite a different standpoint and to quite another answer.

The Gita's solution is to rise above our natural being and normal mind, above our intellectual and ethical perplexities into another consciousness with another law of being and therefore another standpoint for our action ; where personal desire and personal emotions no longer govern it ; where the dualities fall away ; where the action is no longer our own and where therefore the sense of personal virtue and personal sin is exceeded ; where the universal, the impersonal, the divine spirit works out through us its purpose in the world ; where we are ourselves by a new and divine birth changed into being of that being, consciousness of that consciousness, power of that power, bliss of that bliss, and living no longer in our lower nature, have no works to do of our own, no personal aim to pursue of our own, but if we do works at all,—and that is the one real problem and difficulty left,—do only the divine works, those of which our outward nature is only a passive instrument and no longer the cause, no longer provides the motive ; for the motive-power is above us in the will of the Master of our works.

And this is presented to us as the true solution, because it goes back to the real truth of our being and to live according to the real truth of our being is evidently the highest solution and the sole entirely true solution of the problems of our existence. Our mental and vital personality is a truth of our natural existence, but a truth of the ignorance, and all that attaches itself to it is also truth of that order, practically valid for the works of the ignorance, but no longer valid when we get back to the real truth of our being. But how can we actually be sure that this is the truth? We cannot so long as we remain satisfied with our mental experience; for our mental experience is wholly that of this lower nature full of the ignorance. We can only know this greater truth by living it, that is to say by passing beyond the mental into the spiritual experience, by Yoga. For the living out of spiritual experience until we cease to be mind and become spirit, until, liberated from the imperfections of our present nature, we are able to live entirely in our true and divine being is what in the end we mean by Yoga.

This upward transference of our centre of being and the consequent transformation of our whole existence and consciousness, with a resultant change in the whole spirit and motive of our action, the action remaining precisely the same in all its outward appearances, makes the gist of the Gita's Karmoyoga. Change your being, be reborn into the spirit and by that new birth proceed with the action to which the Spirit within has appointed you, may be said to be the heart of its message. Or again, put otherwise, with a deeper and more spiritual import,—make the work you have to do here your means of inner spiritual rebirth, the divine birth, and, having become divine, do still divine works as an instrument of the Divine for the leading of the peoples. Therefore there are here two things which have to be clearly laid down and clearly grasped, the way to the change, to this upward transference, this

new divine birth, and the nature of the work or rather the spirit in which it has to be done, since the outward form of it does not at all change, although really its scope and aim become quite different. But these two things are practically the same, for the elucidation of one elucidates the other. The spirit of our action arises from the nature of our being and the inner foundation it has taken, but also this nature is itself affected by the trend and spiritual effect of our action; a very great change in the spirit of our works changes the nature of our being and alters the foundation it has taken; it shifts the centre of conscious force from which we act. If life and action were entirely illusory, as some would have it, if the spirit had nothing to do with works or life, this would not be so; but the soul in us develops itself by life and works and, not indeed so much the action itself, but the way of our soul's inner force of working determines its relations to the spirit. This is, indeed, the justification of Karmayoga as a practical means of the higher self-realisation.

We start from this foundation that the present inner life of man, almost entirely dependent as it is upon his vital and physical nature, only lifted beyond it by a limited play of mental energy, is not the whole of his possible existence, not even the whole of his present real existence. There is within him a hidden Self, of which his present nature is either only an outer appearance or is a partial dynamic result. The Gita seems throughout to admit its dynamic reality and not to adopt the severer view of the extreme Vedantists that it is only an appearance, a view which strikes at the very roots of all works and action. Its way of formulating this element of its thought philosophically,—which might be done in a different way,—is to admit the Sankhya distinction between the Soul and Nature, the power that knows, supports and informs and the power that works, acts, provides all the variations of instrument, medium and process. Only it takes the free

and immutable soul of the Sankhyas, calls it in Vedantic language the one immutable omnipresent Self or Brahman, and distinguishes it from this other soul involved in Nature, which is our mutable and dynamic being, the multiple soul of things, the basis of variation and personality. But in what then consists this action of Nature?

It consists in a power of process, Prakriti, which is the interplay of three fundamental modes of its working, three qualities, gunas. And what is the medium? It is the complex system of existence created by a graded evolution of the instruments of Prakriti, which, as they are reflected here in the soul's experience of her workings, we may call successively the reason and the ego, the mind, the senses and the elements of material energy which are the basis of its forms. These are all mechanical, a complex engine of Nature, yantra; and from our modern point of view we may say that they are all involved in material energy and manifest themselves in it as the soul in Nature becomes aware of itself by an upward evolution of each instrument, but in the inverse order, matter, sensation, mind, reason. Reason, which is at first only pre-occupied with the workings of Nature, may then detect their ultimate character, may see them only as a play of the three gunas in which the soul is entangled, may distinguish between the soul and these workings; then the soul gets a chance of disentangling itself and of getting back to its original freedom and immutable existence. In Vedantic language, it ceases to identify itself with the instruments and workings of Nature, with its becoming; it identifies itself with its true Self and being and recovers its immutable self-existence. It is then from this self-existence, according to the Gita, that it can freely and as the master of its being, the Ishwara, support the action of its becoming.

Looking only at the psychological facts on which these philosophical distinctions, are founded,—philosophy

is only a way of formulating to ourselves intellectually the psychological and physical facts of existence and their relation to any ultimate reality that may exist,—we may say that there are two lives we can lead, the life of the soul engrossed in the workings of its active nature, identified with its psychological and physical instruments, limited by them, bound by its personality, subject to nature, and the life of the spirit, superior to these things, large, impersonal, universal, free, unlimited, transcendent, supporting with an infinite equality its natural being and action, but exceeding them by its freedom and infinity. We may live in what is now our natural being or we may live on our greater and spiritual being. This is the first great distinction on which the Karmayoga of the Gita is founded.

The whole question and the whole method lie then in the liberation of the soul from the limitations of our present natural being. In our natural life the first dominating fact is our subjection to the forms of material Nature, the outward touches of things. These present themselves to our life through the senses, and the life through the senses immediately returns upon these objects to seize upon them and deal with them, desires, attaches itself, seeks for results. The mind in all its inner sensations, reactions, emotions, habitual ways of perceiving, thinking and feeling obeys this action of the senses ; the reason too carried away by the mind gives itself up to this life of the senses, this life in which the inner being is subject to the externality of things and cannot for a moment really get above it and outside the circle of its action upon us and its psychological results and reactions within us. It cannot get beyond them because there is the principle of ego by which the reason differentiates the sum of the action of Nature upon our mind, will, sense, body from her action in other minds, wills, nervous organisms, bodies ; and life to us means only the way she affects our ego and

the way our ego replies to her touches. We know nothing else, we seem to be nothing else ; the soul itself seems then only a separate mass of mind, will, emotional and nervous reception and reaction. We may enlarge our ego, identify ourselves with the family, clan, class, country, nation, humanity even, but still the ego remains in all these disguises the root of our actions, only it finds a larger satisfaction of its separate being by these larger dealings with external things.

What acts in us is still the will of the natural being seizing upon the touches of the external world to satisfy the different phases of its personality, and the will in this seizing is always a will of desire and passion and attachment to our works and their results, the will of Nature in us ; our personal will, we say, but our personality is a creation of Nature, it is not and cannot be our free self, our independent being. The whole is the action of the modes of Nature. It may be a tamasic action, and then we have an inert personality subject to and satisfied with the mechanical round of things, incapable of any strong effort at a freer action and mastery. Or it may be the rajasic action, and then we have the restless active personality which throws itself upon Nature and tries to make her serve its needs and desires, but does not see that its apparent mastery is a servitude, since its needs and desires are those of Nature, and while we are subject to them, there can be for us no freedom. Or it may be a sattwic action, and then we have the enlightened personality which tries to live by reason or to realise some preferred ideal of good, truth or beauty; but this reason is still subject to the appearances of Nature and these ideals are only changing phases of our personality in which we find in the end no sure rule or permanent satisfaction. We are still carried on a wheel of mutation, obeying in our circlings through the ego some Power within us and within all this, but not ourselves that Power or in union and communion with

it. Still there is no freedom, no real mastery.

Yet freedom is possible. For that we have to get first away into ourselves from the action of the external world upon our senses ; that is to say we have to live inwardly and be able to hold back the natural running of the senses after their external objects. A mastery of the senses, an ability to do without all that they hanker after, is the first condition of the true soul-life ; only so can we begin to feel that there is a soul within us which is other than the mutations of mind in its reception of the touches of outward things, a soul which in its depths goes back to something self-existent, immutable, tranquil, self-possessed, grandiose and august, master of itself and unaffected by the eager runnings of our external nature. But this cannot be done so long as we are subject to desire. For it is desire, the principle of all our superficial life, which satisfies itself with the life of the senses and finds its whole account in the play of the passions. We must get rid then of desire and, that propensity of our natural being destroyed, the passions which are its emotional results, will fall into quietude ; for the joy and grief of possession and of loss, success and failure, pleasant and unpleasant touches, which entertain them, will pass out of our souls. A calm equality will then be gained. And since we have still to live and act in the world and our nature in works is to seek for the fruits of our works, we must change that nature and do works without attachment to their fruits, otherwise desire and all its results remain. But how can we change this nature of the doer of works in us ? By dissociating works from ego and personality, by seeing through the reason that all this is only the play of the gunas of Nature, and by dissociating our soul from the play, by making it first of all the observer of the workings of Nature and leaving those works to the Power that is really behind them, the something in Nature which is greater than ourselves, not our

personality, but the Master of the universe. But the mind will not permit all this ; its nature is to run out after the senses and carry the reason and will with it. Then we must learn to still the mind. We must attain that absolute peace and stillness in which we become aware of the calm, motionless, blissful Self within us which is eternally untroubled and unaffected by the touches of things, is sufficient to itself and finds there alone its eternal satisfaction.

This Self is our self-existent being. It is not limited by our personal existence. It is the same in all existences, pervasive, equal to all things, supporting the whole universal action with its infinity, but unlimited by all that is finite, unmodified by the changings of Nature and personality. When this Self is revealed within us, when we feel its peace and stillness, we can grow into that ; we can transfer the poise of our soul from its lower immergence in Nature and draw it back into the Self. We can do this by the force of the things we have attained, calm, equality, passionless impersonality. For as we grow in these things, carry them to their fullness, subject all our nature to them, we are growing into this calm, equal, passionless, impersonal, all-pervading Self. Our senses fall into that stillness and receive the touches of the world on us with a supreme tranquillity ; our mind falls into stillness and becomes the calm, universal witness ; our ego dissolves itself into this impersonal existence. All things we see in this self which we have become, in our self ; and we see this self in all ; we become one being with all beings in the spiritual basis of their existence. By doing works in this selfless tranquillity and impersonality, our works cease to be ours, cease to bind or trouble us with their reactions. Nature and her gunas weave the web of her works, but without affecting our griefless self-existent tranquillity. All is given up into that one equal and universal Brahman.

But here there are two difficulties. First, there seems to be an antinomy between this tranquil and immutable Self and the action of Nature. How then does the action at all exist or how can it continue once we have entered into the immutable self-existence? Where in that is the will to works which would make the action of our nature possible? If we say with the Sankhya that the will is in Nature and not in the Self, still there must be a motive in Nature and the power in her to draw the soul into its workings by interest, ego and attachment, and when these things cease to reflect themselves in the soul-consciousness, her power ceases and the motive of works ceases with it. But the Gita does not accept this view, which seems indeed to necessitate the existence of many Purushas and not one universal Purusha, otherwise the separate experience of the one liberated soul, while millions of others were still involved, would not be intelligible. Nature is not a separate principle, but the power of the Supreme going forth in cosmic creation. But if the Supreme is only this immutable self and the individual is only something that has gone forth from him in the Power, then the moment it returns and takes its poise in the self, everything must cease except the supreme unity and the supreme calm. Secondly, even if in some mysterious way action still continues, yet since the Self is equal to all things, it cannot matter whether works is done or, if they are done, it cannot matter what work is done. Why then this insistence on the most violent and disastrous form of action, this chariot, this battle, this warrior, this divine charioteer?

The Gita answers by presenting the Supreme as something greater even than the immutable self, more comprehensive, one who is at once this self and the Master of works in Nature. But he directs the works of Nature with the eternal calm, the equality, the superiority to works and personality which belong to the immutable.

This, we may say, is the poise of being from which he directs works, and by growing into this we are growing into his being and into the poise of divine works. From this he goes forth as the Will and Power of his being in Nature, manifests himself in all existences, is born as Man in the world, is there in the heart of all men, reveals himself as the Avatar, the divine birth in man ; and as man grows into his being, it is into the divine birth that he grows. Works must be done as a sacrifice to this Lord of our works, and we must by growing into the self realise our oneness with him in our being and see our personality as a partial manifestation of him in Nature. One with him in being, we grow one with all beings in the universe and do divine works, not as ours, but as his workings through us for the maintenance and leading of the peoples.

This is the essential thing to be done, and once this is done, the difficulties which present themselves to Arjuna will disappear. The problem is no longer one of our personal action, for what makes our personality becomes a thing temporal and subordinate, the question is then only one of the workings of the divine Will through us in the universe. To understand that we must know what this supreme Being is in himself and in Nature, what the workings of Nature are and what they lead to, and the intimate relation between the soul in Nature and this supreme Soul, of which bhakti with knowledge is the foundation. The elucidation of these questions is the subject of the rest of the Gita.

The Synthesis of Yoga

CHAPTER XLIV

THE WAY OF DEVOTION

Bhakti in itself is as wide as the heart-yearning of the soul for the Divine and as simple and straightforward as love and desire going straight towards their object. It cannot therefore be fixed down to any systematic method, cannot found itself on a psychological science like the Rajayōga, or a psycho-physical like the Hatha-yoga, or start from a definite intellectual process like the ordinary method of the Jnanayoga. It may employ various means or supports, and man, having in him a tendency towards order, process and system, may try to methodise his resort to these auxiliaries : but to give an account of their variations one would have to review almost all man's numberless religions upon their side of inner approach to the Deity. Really, however, the more intimate yoga of Bhakti resolves itself simply into these four movements, the desire of the Soul when it turns towards God and the straining of its emotion towards him, the pain of love and the divine return of love, the delight of love possessed and the play of that delight, and the eternal enjoyment of the divine Lover which is the heart of celestial bliss. These are things that are at once too simple and too profound for methodising or for analysis. One can at best only say, here are these four successive elements, steps, if we may so call them, of the siddhi, and here are, largely, some of the means which it uses, and here again are some of the aspects and experiences of the sadhana of

devotion. We need only trace broadly the general line they follow before we turn to consider how the way of devotion enters into a synthetic and integral Yoga, what place it takes there and how its principle affects the other principles of divine living.

All Yoga is a turning of the human mind and the human soul, not yet divine in realisation, but feeling the divine impulse and attraction in it, towards that by which it finds its greater being. Emotionally, the first form which this turning takes must be that of adoration. In ordinary religion this adoration wears the form of external worship and that again develops a most external form of ceremonial worship. This element is ordinarily necessary because the mass of men live in their physical minds, cannot realise anything except by the force of a physical symbol and cannot feel that they are living anything except by the force of a physical action. We might apply here the Tantric gradation of *sādhana*, which makes the way of the *paśhu*, the herd, the animal or physical being, the lowest stage of its discipline, and say that the purely or predominantly ceremonial adoration is the first step of this lowest part of the way. It is evident that even real religion,—and Yoga is something more than religion,—only begins when this quite outward worship corresponds to something really felt within the mind, some genuine submission, awe or spiritual aspiration, to which it becomes an aid, an outward expression and also a sort of periodical or constant reminder helping to draw back the mind to it from the preoccupations of ordinary life. But so long as it is only an idea of the Godhead to which one renders reverence or homage, we have not yet got to the beginning of Yoga. The aim of Yoga being union, its beginning must always be a seeking after the Divine, a longing after some kind of touch, closeness or possession. When this comes on us, the adoration becomes always primarily an inner worship ; we begin to make our-

selves a temple of the Divine, our thoughts and feelings a constant prayer of aspiration and seeking, our whole life an external service and worship. It is as this change, this new soul-tendency grows, that the religion of the devotee becomes a Yoga, a growing contact and union. It does not follow that the outward worship will necessarily be dispensed with, but it will increasingly become only a physical expression or outflowing of the inner devotion and adoration, the wave of the soul throwing itself out in speech and symbolic act.

Adoration, before it turns into an element of the deeper Yoga of devotion, a petal of the flower of love, its homage and self-uplifting to its sun, must bring with it, if it is profound, an increasing consecration of the being to the Divine who is adored. And one element of this consecration must be a self-purifying so as to become fit for the divine contact, or for the entrance of the Divine into the temple of our inner being, or for his self-revelation in the shrine of the heart. This purifying may be ethical in its character, but it will not be merely the moralist's seeking for the right and blameless action or even, when once we reach the stage of Yoga, an obedience to the law of God as revealed in formal religion ; but it will be a throwing away, *katharsis*, of all that conflicts whether with the idea of the Divine in himself or of the Divine in ourselves. In the former case it becomes in habit of feeling and outer act an imitation of the Divine, in the latter a growing into his likeness in our nature. What inner adoration is to ceremonial worship, this growing into the divine likeness is to the outward ethical life. It culminates in a sort of liberation by likeness to the Divine,* a liberation from our lower nature and a change into the divine nature.

Consecration becomes in its fullness a devoting of all our being to the Divine ; therefore also of all our thoughts and our works. Here the Yoga takes into itself

* *Sadrishya-mukti*

the essential elements of the Yoga of works and the Yoga of knowledge, but in its own manner and with its own peculiar spirit. It is a sacrifice of life and works to the Divine, but a sacrifice of love more than a tuning of the will to the divine Will. The bhakta offers up his life and all that he is and all that he has and all that he does to the Divine. This surrender may take the ascetic form, as when he leaves the ordinary life of men and devotes his days solely to prayer and praise and worship or to ecstatic meditation, gives up his personal possessions and becomes the monk or the mendicant whose one only possession is the Divine, gives up all action in life except those only which help or belong to the communion with the Divine and communion with other devotees, or at most keeps the doing from the secure fortress of the ascetic life of those services to men which seem peculiarly the outflowing of the divine nature of love, compassion and good. But there is the wider self-consecration, proper to any integral Yoga, which, accepting the fullness of life and the world in its entirety as the play of the Divine, offers up the whole being into his possession ; it is a holding of all one is and has as belonging to him only and not to ourselves and a doing of all works as an offering to him. By this comes the complete active consecration of both the inner and the outer life, the unmutilated self-giving.

There is also the consecration of the thoughts to the Divine. In its inception this is the attempt to fix the mind on the object of adoration,—for naturally the restless human mind is occupied with other objects and, even when it is directed upwards, constantly drawn away by the world—so that in the end it habitually thinks of him and all else is only secondary and thought of only in relation to him. This is done often with the aid of a physical image or, more intimately and characteristically, of a mantra or a divine name through which the divine being is realised. There are supposed by those who systematise to be three stages of

the seeking through the devotion of the mind, first, the constant hearing of the divine name, qualities and all that has been attached to them, secondly, the constant thinking on them or on the divine being or personality, thirdly, the settling and fixing of the mind on the object ; and by this comes the full realisation. And by these, too, there comes when the accompanying feeling or the concentration is very intense, the Samadhi, the ecstatic trance in which the consciousness passes away from outer objects. But all this is really incidental ; the one thing essential is the intense devotion of the thought in the mind to the object of adoration. Although it seems akin to the contemplation of the way of knowledge, it differs from that in its spirit. It is in its real nature not a still, but an ecstatic contemplation ; it seeks not to pass into the being of the Divine, but to bring the Divine into ourselves and to lose ourselves in the deep ecstasy of his presence or of his possession ; and its bliss is not the peace of unity, but the ecstasy of union. Here, too, there may be the separative self-consecration which ends in the giving up of all other thought of life for the possession of this ecstasy, eternal afterwards in planes beyond, or the comprehensive consecration in which all the thoughts are full of the Divine and even in the occupations of life every thought remembers him. As in the other Yogas, so in this, one comes to see the Divine everywhere and in all and to pour out the realisation of the Divine in all one's inner activities and outward actions. But all is supported here by the primary force of the emotional union : for it is by love that the entire self-consecration and the entire possession is accomplished, and thought and action become shapes and figures of the divine love which possesses the spirit and its members.

This is the ordinary movement by which what may be at first a vague adoration of some idea of the Divine takes on the hue and character and then, once entered in-

to the path of Yoga, the inner reality and intense experience of divine love. But there is the more intimate Yoga which from the first consists in this love and attains only by the intensity of its longing without other process or method. All the rest comes, but it comes out of this, as leaf and flower out of the seed ; other things are not the means of developing and fulfilling love, but the radiations of love already growing in the soul. This is the way that the soul follows when, while occupied perhaps with the normal human life, it has heard the flute of the Godhead behind the near screen of secret woodlands and no longer possesses itself, can have no satisfaction or rest till it has pursued and seized and possessed the divine flutepayer. This is in essence the power of love itself in the heart and soul turning from earthly objects to the spiritual source of all beauty and delight. There live in this seeking all the sentiment and passion, all the moods and experiences of love concentrated on a supreme object of desire and intensified a hundredfold beyond the highest acme of intensity possible to a human love. There is the disturbance of the whole life, the illumination by an unseized vision, the unsatisfied yearning for a single object of the heart's desire, the intense impatience of all that distracts from the one preoccupation, the intense pain of the obstacles that stand in the way of possession, the perfect vision of all beauty and delight in a single form. And there are all the many moods of love, the joy of musing and absorption, the delight of the meeting and fulfilment and embrace, the pain of separation, the wrath of love, the tears of longing, the increased delight of reunion. The heart is the scene of this supreme idyll of the inner consciousness, but a heart which undergoes increasingly an intense spiritual change and becomes the radiantly unfolding lotus of the spirit. And as the intensity of its seeking is beyond the highest power of the normal human emotions, so also the delight and the final ecstasy are beyond the reach of

the imagination and beyond expression by speech. For this is the delight of the Godhead that passes human understanding.

Indian bhakti has given to this divine love powerful forms, poetic symbols which are not in reality so much symbols as intimate expressions of truth which can find no other expression. It uses human relations and sees a divine person, not as mere figures, but because there are divine relations of supreme Delight and Beauty with the human soul of which human relations are the imperfect but still the real type, and because that Delight and Beauty are not abstractions or qualities of a quite impalpable metaphysical entity, but the very body and form of the supreme Being. It is a living Soul to which the soul of the bhakta yearns ; for the source of all life is not an idea or a conception or a state of existence, but a real Being. Therefore in the possession of the divine Beloved all the life of the soul is satisfied and all the relations by which it finds and in which it expresses itself, are wholly fulfilled ; therefore, too, by any and all of them can the Beloved be sought, though those which admit the greatest intensity, are always those by which he can be most intensely pursued and possessed with the profoundest ecstasy. He is sought within in the heart and therefore apart from all by an inward-gathered concentration of the being in the soul itself ; but he is also seen and loved everywhere where he manifests his being. All the beauty and joy of existence is seen as his joy and beauty ; he is embraced by the spirit in all beings ; the ecstasy of love enjoyed pours itself out in a universal love ; all existence becomes a radiation of its delight and even in its very appearances is transformed into something other than its outward appearance. The world itself is experienced as a play of the divine Delight, a Lila, and that in which the world loses itself is the heaven of beatitude of the eternal union.

The Psychology of Social Development

XXIV

For a subjective age to find its fruition in a spiritual society, it is not enough that certain ideas favourable to that turn of human life should take hold of the general mind of mankind, permeate the ordinary motives of its thought, art, ethics, political ideals, social effort, or even get well into its inner way of thinking and feeling. It is not enough even that the idea of the kingdom of God on earth, a reign of spirituality, freedom and unity, a real and inner equality and brotherhood—and not merely an outward and mechanical equalisation and association—should become definitely an ideal of life, should be held as possible, desirable, to be sought and striven for, should come forward as a governing idea of the human mind. That would evidently be a very great step forward,—considering what the ideals of mankind now are, an enormous step. It would be the necessary beginning, the indispensable mental environment for a reconstruction of human society. But by itself it might only bring about a half-hearted or else a strong but only partially and temporarily successful attempt to bring something of the manifest spirit into

human life and its institutions. That is all that mankind has attempted to do in the past ; nor has it ever attempted to work even that out thoroughly, except, and even there with serious defects and qualifications, in the limits of a religious order or a peculiar community. If we do not get beyond the mere holding of the ideal and its general influence in human life, this is also all that mankind will attempt in the future. More is needed ; a general spiritual awakening and aspiration in mankind is the large motive-power wanted, but the effective power must be the re-creating of individual manhood in the spiritual type.

For the way that humanity deals with an ideal is to be satisfied with it as an aspiration which is for the most part left only as an aspiration and a partial influence. It is not allowed to mould the whole life, but only more or less to colour it ; it is often used even as a cover and a plea for things that are diametrically opposed to its real spirit ; institutions are created which are supposed to embody it and the fact that the ideal is held and men live under its institutions is treated as sufficient, it becomes almost an excuse for not living according to the ideal or in the spirit that made the institutions. But spirituality is in its very nature a thing subjective and not mechanical ; it is nothing if it is not lived inwardly and if the outward life does not flow out of this inward living. Symbols, types, conventions, ideas are not sufficient. A spiritual symbol is only a meaningless ticket, unless the thing symbolised is realised in the spirit ; a spiritual convention easily becomes a falsehood ; a spiritual type may be a temporary mould into which spiritual living may flow, but it is also a limitation and may become a prison in which it fossilises and perishes ; a spiritual idea is a power, but only when it is both inwardly and outwardly creative. Here we have to enlarge and to deepen the pragmatic principle that truth is what we create, and in this sense first, that it is what we create within, in other words, what we be-

come. Undoubtedly, the spiritual truth exists eternally beyond in the heavens of the spirit, but it is of no avail for humanity, it does not become truth of earth, truth of life until it is lived. The divine perfection is always there above us, but for man to become divine and to live the divine is what is meant by spirituality.

This, as the subjective religions recognise, can only be brought about by an individual change in each human life. The collective soul exists only as a great half-subconscient source of the individual existence ; for it to take a psychological form and a new kind of collective life it depends upon the shaping growth of its individuals, and as will be the spirit and life of the individuals constituting it, so will be the realised spirit and life of the collectivity. A society that lives not by its men but by its institutions, is not a collective soul, but a machine ; its life becomes a mechanical product and ceases to be a living growth. Therefore the coming of a spiritual age must be preceded by the appearance of an increasing number of individuals who are no longer satisfied with the normal intellectual, vital and physical life of man, but perceive that a greater evolution is the real goal of humanity and attempt to effect it in themselves and lead others to it that eventually it may become the recognised goal of the race. In proportion as they succeed and to the degree to which they carry this evolution, the yet unrealised potentiality which they represent will become an actual possibility of the future.

This will not mean merely, as a great access of spirituality in the past has ordinarily meant, the coming of a new religion of a special type attempting to impose itself upon mankind as a new universal order. The aim will be indeed the essential aim of subjective religions, but if it limits itself by the old familiar apparatus and means of a religious movement, it is likely to register another failure. A religious movement means, usually, a wave of spiritual

excitement and aspiration communicating itself to a large number of individuals by which there comes a temporary uplifting, partly spiritual, partly ethical, partly dogmatic in its nature ; the wave after a generation or two or at most a few generations begins to subside. If it is a very powerful movement with a great spiritual personality as its source, it leaves behind a central influence and an inner discipline which may be the starting-point of fresh waves ; but these will be constantly less powerful and enduring. For meanwhile in order to bind together the faithful and at the same time to mark them off from the unregenerated outer world, there will have grown up a religious order, a Church, a hierarchy, with its type of ethical life, its set of dogmas, ceremonials and what not, an elaborate machinery for the salvation of mankind. The first result will be that spirituality will be increasingly subordinated to intellectual belief, to outward forms of conduct and to external ritual, the higher to the lower motives, the one thing essential to aids and instruments and accidents. At first the attempt to convert the whole life into spiritual living will give place to a set system of belief and ethics touched by spiritual emotion ; but, finally, that even will be dominated by the outward machinery. The Church will take the place of the spirit, and subscription to its creed, rituals and order will be the thing universally demanded, while spiritual living will be only practised by the few within the limits prescribed by their fixed creed and order ; even that narrow effort will be neglected by the majority. The spirit in the religion will become in the end a thin stream choked by sands with at the most brief occasional floodings of its dry bed of conventions.

Moreover, the ambition of a particular religious belief and form to universalise and impose itself is contrary to the variety of human nature and to one essential character of the Spirit which is freedom and a large unity into which each man must be allowed to grow according to

his own nature. Finally, the usual tendency of these credal religions is to turn towards an after life and to make the regeneration of the earthly life a secondary motive, and this tendency grows always as the original hope of a general regeneration becomes more and more feeble. Therefore while many new spiritual waves with their strong special motives and disciplines must necessarily be the forerunners of a spiritual age, yet their claims must be subordinated in the general mind of mankind and of its spiritual leaders to the recognition that all motives and disciplines are valid and that the one thing essential must take precedence, the conversion of the whole life of the human being to the lead of the spirit, and that the ascent of man into heaven is not the key, but rather his ascent here into the spirit and the descent also of the spirit into his normal humanity. For that and not some post-mortem salvation is the real new birth which humanity awaits as its crowning movement.

Therefore the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being ; an evolution or conversion,—it does not greatly matter which figure we use or what theory we adopt to support it,—of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity, even as the animal man has been largely converted into a highly mentalised humanity. They will be comparatively indifferent to particular belief and form and leave men to resort to the beliefs and forms to which they are naturally drawn. They will only hold as essential the faith in this spiritual conversion, the attempt to live it out and whatever knowledge,—but the form of opinion into which it is thrown does not so much matter,—can be converted into this living. They will especially not make the mistake of thinking that this change can be effected by machinery and outward institutions ; they will know and never for-

get that it has to be lived out by each man inwardly or it can never be made a reality. They will adopt in its real heart of meaning the inward view of the East which bids man seek the secret of his destiny and salvation within ; but also they will accept, though with a different turn given to it, the importance which the West rightly attaches to life and to the making the best we know and can attain the general rule of all life. They will not make society a shadowy background to a few luminous spiritual figures or a rigidly fenced and earth-bound root for the growth of a comparatively rare and sterile flower of ascetic spirituality. They will not accept the theory that the many must necessarily remain on the lower ranges of life and only a few climb into the free air and the light, but will start from the standpoint of the great spirits who have striven to regenerate the race and held that faith in spite of all previous failure. Failures must be originally numerous in everything great and difficult, but the time comes when the experience of past failures can be profitably used and the gate that so long resisted opens. In this as in all great human aspirations and endeavours, an *a priori* declaration of impossibility is a sign of ignorance and weakness, and the motto of the aspirant's endeavour must be the *solvitur ambulando* * of the discoverer, by the doing the difficulty will be solved.

The thing to be done is as large as human life, and therefore the individuals who lead the way, will take all human life for their province. They will consider nothing as alien to them and outside their scope. For every part of human life has to be taken up by the spiritual,—not only the intellectual, the aesthetic, the ethical, but the dynamic, the vital, the physical ; therefore for none of

* The answer of Stephenson to those who argued by strict scientific logic that his engine on rails could not and should not move, " Your difficulty is solved by its moving."

these things or the activities that spring from them, will they have contempt or aversion. In each they will seek for its own proper means of conversion; for knowing that the Divine is concealed in all of them, they will hold that all can be made its means of self-finding and all can be converted into its instruments of divine living. They will see that the great necessity is the conversion of the normal into the spiritual mind and the opening of that mind again into its higher reaches and more and more integral movement. For before the decisive change can be made the intellectual reason has to be converted into the intuitive, until that again can rise into the higher revelatory divine mind or supermind, the mental will into the intuitive and into the higher divine will, and all the other members have, mainly by the compelling force and light of these, to undergo a similar conversion. They will start from and use the knowledge and the means that past effort has developed in this direction, but they will not limit themselves by what is now known of them or cleave only to fixed and stereotyped systems or given groupings of results, but will follow the method of the Spirit in Nature which is a constant rediscovery and new formulation aided by new discovery and a larger synthesis.

The endeavour will be a supreme and difficult labour even for the individual, but much more for the race, and it may well be that, once started, it may not advance rapidly even to its first decisive stage, but will take for that some centuries of effort. But that is not altogether inevitable, for the principle of such changes in Nature seems to be a long obscure preparation followed by a swifter gathering up and precipitation of the elements into the new birth, a rapid conversion. Even when the first decisive change is reached, it may be that all humanity will not be able to rise to that level, but for some time there will be a division into those who are able to live on the spiritual level and those who are only able to live in the light that

descends from it into the mental level. But even that would be a transformation and a beginning ; for it would not mean as in our present vital living an egoistic domination of the undeveloped by the more developed, but, if a government of the younger by the elder brothers of the race, still also a constant working to lift them up to the greater spiritual level and wider horizons. Even after attaining to the first spiritual levels, there would be still yet higher levels within that realm, as the old Vedic poets knew when they spoke of the spiritual life as a constant ascent,—

brahmânas tvâ çatakrato
ud vançam iva yemire ;
yat sânoh sânum âruhat,
bhûri aspashta kartVam,—

"The singers of the word climb up thee as up a ladder, O hundred-powered. As one ascends from height to height, there is revealed the much that has yet to be done." But once the foundation has been secured, the rest develops by a progressive self-unfolding. As again it is phrased by the ancient poets,

abhyâvasthâh pra jâyante,
pra vavrer vavr'ic chiketa ;
upasthe mâtur vi chashte,

"Status is born upon status ; covering after covering he comes conscious with knowledge ; in the lap of the Mother the soul begins to see widely."

This at least is the highest hope and possible destiny that opens out before the human view, and it is a possibility which the progress of the human mind seems on the way to redevelop, and this time with certain conditions which look like the first elements of success. And if so and if the number of individuals who seek to realise the possibility in themselves and in the world grows large and they get nearer the right way, then the Spirit who is here

in man as the concealed divinity, the developing light and power, will descend more fully as the inner Godhead, the avatar into the soul of mankind and into the great individualities in whom the light and power are the strongest, and there will be fulfilled the change which will prepare the transition of human life from its present limits into those larger and purer horizons.

The Ideal of Human Unity

XXXV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In other words,—and this is the conclusion at which we arrive,—while it is possible to construct a precarious and quite mechanical unity by political and administrative means, the unity of the human race, even if achieved, can only be secured and can only be made real by the religion of humanity, which is at present the highest active ideal of mankind, spiritualising itself and becoming the general inner law of human life.

The outward unity may well achieve itself,—possibly though by no means certainly,—because that is the inevitable final trend of the workings of Nature in human society which make for larger and yet larger aggregations and cannot fail to arrive at a total aggregation of mankind in a closer international system.

This working of Nature depends for its means of fulfilment upon two forces which combine to make the larger aggregation inevitable. First, there is the increasing closeness of common interests or at least the interlacing and interrelation of interests in a larger and yet larger circle which makes old divisions an obstacle and a cause of weakness, obstruction and friction, and the clash and collision that comes out of this friction a ruinous calamity to all, even to the victor who has to pay a too heavy price for his gains ; and even these expected gains, as war becomes

more complex and disastrous, are becoming more and more difficult to achieve and the success problematical. The increasing perception of this community or interrelation of interests and unwillingness to face the consequences of collision and ruinous struggle must lead men to welcome any means for mitigating the divisions which lead to such disasters. If the trend to the mitigation of divisions is once given a definite form, that commences an impetus which drives towards closer and closer union. If she cannot arrive by these means, if the incoherence is too great for the trend of unification to triumph, Nature will use other means, such as war and conquest or the temporary domination of a powerful state or empire or the menace of a domination compelling those threatened to adopt a closer system of union. It is these means and this force of outward necessity which she used to create nation-units and national empires, and, however modified in the circumstances and workings, it is at bottom the same force and the same means which she is using to drive mankind towards international unification.

But, secondly, there is the force of a common uniting sentiment. This may work in two ways ; it may come before as an originating or contributory cause or it may come afterwards as a cementing result. In the first case, the sentiment of a larger unity springs up among units which were previously divided and leads them to seek after a form of union, which may then be brought about principally by the force of the sentiment and its idea or by that secondarily as an aid to other and more outward events and causes. We may note that in earlier times this sentiment was insufficiently effective, as among the petty clan or regional nations, and unity had ordinarily to be effected by outward circumstances and generally by the grossest of them, by war and conquest, by the domination of the most powerful among many warring or contiguous peoples. But in later times the force of the sentiment of

unity, supported as it has been by a clearer political idea, has become more effective and the larger national aggregates have grown up by a simple act of federation or union, though this has sometimes had to be preceded by a common struggle for liberty or a union in war against a common enemy ; so have grown into one the United States, Italy, Germany, and more peacefully the Australian and South African federations. But in other cases, especially in the earlier national aggregations, the sentiment of unity has grown up largely or entirely as the result of the formal, outward or mechanical union. But whether to form or to preserve the growth of the sentiment, the psychological factor is indispensable ; without it there can be no secure and lasting union. Its absence, the failure to create such a sentiment or to make it sufficiently living, natural, forcible has been the cause of the precariousness of such aggregates as Austro-Hungary and of the ephemeral character of the empires of the past, even as it likely to bring about, unless circumstances change, the collapse or disintegration of the great present-day empires.

The trend towards an international world-unification which is now just beginning to declare itself, though the causes which made it inevitable have been for some time at work, is being brought about by the pressure of need and environment, by outward circumstances. At the same time there is a sentiment which is being stimulated by these outward circumstances, a cosmopolitan, international sentiment, still rather nebulous and vaguely ideal, which may accelerate the growth of the formal union. In itself this sentiment would be an insufficient cement for the preservation of any mechanical union which might be created ; for it could not easily be so close and forcible a sentiment as the national. It would have to subsist on the conveniences of union as its only substantial provender, and the experience of the past shows that this is in the end unable to resist the pressure of unfavourable cir-

cumstances and the reassertion of old or the effective growth of new centrifugal forces. But it is being aided by a more powerful force, a sort of intellectual religion of humanity, clear in the minds of the few, vaguely felt in its effects and its disguises by the many, which has largely helped to bring about much of the trend of the modern mind and the drift of its developing institutions. This is a psychological force which tends to break beyond the formula of the nation and aspires to replace the religion of country and even, in its more extreme forms, to destroy altogether the national sentiment and to abolish its divisions so as to create the single nation of mankind.

We may say, then, that this trend must eventually realise itself, however great may be the difficulties ; and they are really enormous, much greater than those which attended the national formation. If the present unsatisfactory condition of international relations should lead to a series of cataclysms, either large and world-embracing like the present war or, though each more limited in scope, yet in their sum world-pervading and necessarily, by the growing interrelation of interests, affecting those who do not fall directly under their touch, then mankind will be forced in self-defence to a new, closer and more stringently unified order of things. Its choice will be between that and a lingering suicide. If the human reason cannot find out the way, Nature herself is sure so to shape these upheavals as to bring about her end. Therefore,—whether soon or in the long run, whether brought about by its own growing sentiment of unity, stimulated by common interest and convenience, or by the evolutionary pressure of circumstances,—we may take it that an eventual realisation of at least some formal unification of human life on earth is,—the incalculable being always allowed for,—practically inevitable.

We have tried to show from the analogy of the past evolution of the nation that this international unification

must culminate or at least is likely to culminate in one of two forms, either a centralised world-State or a looser world-union which may be either a close federation or a simple confederacy of the peoples for the common ends of mankind. It is the last form which seems to us the most desirable because it gives sufficient scope for the principle of variation which is necessary for the free play of life and the healthy progress of the race. The process by which the world-State may come, starts with the creation of a central body which will at first have very limited functions, but, once created, must absorb by degrees all the different functions of a centralised international control, as the State, first in the form of a monarchy and then of a parliament, has been absorbing by degrees the whole control of the life of the nation, so that we are now within measurable distance of a centralised socialistic State which will leave no part of the life of its individuals unregulated. A similar process in the world-State will end in the taking up and the regulation of the whole life of the peoples into its hands ; it may even end by abolishing national individuality and turning the divisions that it has created into mere departmental groupings, provinces and districts of the one common State. Such an eventuality may seem now a mere unrealisable idea, but it is one which, under certain conditions that are by no means beyond the scope of ultimate possibility, may well become feasible and even, after a certain point is reached, inevitable. A federal system and still more a confederacy would mean on the other hand the preservation of the national basis and a greater or less freedom of national life, but the subordination of national to the larger of the common international interests and of full separate freedom to the greater international necessities.

It may be questioned whether the past analogies are a safe guide in a problem so new and whether something else might not be evolved more intimately and independ-

ently arising from it and suitable to its complexities. But mankind even in dealing with its new problems works upon past experience and therefore upon past motives and analogies ; even when it seizes on new ideas, it goes upon the past in the form it gives to them, and behind the changes of the most radical revolutions we see this unavoidable principle of continuity surviving in the heart of the new order. Moreover, these alternatives seem the only way in which the two forces in presence can work out their conflict, either by the disappearance of the one, the separative national instinct, or by an accommodation between them. On the other hand, it is quite possible that human thought and action may take so new a turn as to bring in a number of unforeseen possibilities and lead to a quite different ending. And one might upon these lines set one's imagination to work and produce perhaps a utopia of a better kind ; such constructive efforts of the human imagination have their value, and often a very great value. But any such speculations would evidently have been out of place in the study we have attempted.

Assuredly, neither of the two alternatives and none of the three forms we have considered are free from serious objections. A centralised world-State would signify the triumph of the idea of mechanical unity or rather uniformity. It would inevitably mean the undue depression of an indispensable element in the vigour of human life and progress, the free life of the individual, the free variation of the peoples. It must end, if it becomes permanent and fulfils all its tendencies, either in a death in life, a stagnation or by the insurgence of some new saving but revolutionary force or principle which would shatter the whole fabric into pieces. The mechanical tendency is one to which the logical reason of man becomes easily addicted and its operations are, too, obviously the easiest to manage and the most ready to hand ; its full evolution may seem to the reason desirable, necessary, inevitable, but its end

is predestined. A centralised socialistic State may be a necessity of the future, but a reaction from it is equally a necessity ; the greater its pressure, the more certainly will it be met by the spread of the spiritual, the intellectual, the vital and practical principle of Anarchism in revolt against that mechanical pressure. So too a centralised mechanical world-State must rouse in the end a similar force against it and might well end in a crumbling up and disintegration, even in the necessity for a repetition of the cycle of humanity ending in a better attempt to solve the problem. The only thing that could keep it in being would be if humanity agreed to allow all the rest of its life to be regularised for it for the sake of peace and stability and took refuge for its individual freedom in the spiritual life, as happened once under the Roman empire, and even that would be only a temporary solution. Again a federal system would tend inevitably to establish one general type for human life, institutions and activities and allow only a play of minor variations ; but with that the need of variation in living Nature could not always rest satisfied. On the other hand, a looser confederacy might well be open to the objection that it would give too ready a handle for centrifugal forces, were such to arise in new strength, and that it could not be permanent, but must turn after all in one direction or the other and end either in a centralisation or a break-up of unity.

The saving element needed is a new psychological factor which will at once make a united life necessary to humanity and force it to respect the principle of freedom. The religion of humanity seems to be the one growing force which tends in that direction ; for it makes for the sense of human oneness, it has the idea of the race, and yet at the same time it respects the human individual and the natural human grouping. But its present intellectual form seems hardly sufficient. The idea, powerful in itself and in its effects, is yet not powerful enough to mould the

whole life of the race in its image ; it has to concede too much to the egoistic side of human nature, once all and still nine tenths of our being, with which its larger idea is in conflict ; and on the other side, leaning principally on the reason, it helps too much the mechanical solution. For the rational idea ends always by being captured by its machinery and becoming the slave of the machine, until a new idea revolts against it and breaks up the machinery only to substitute in the end another mechanical system.

A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this we do not mean what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief. Mankind has tried unity by that means ; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development. What is meant, is the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine reality, in which we are all one and of which humanity is the highest vehicle on earth and that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here, with a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. It means that oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of co-operation, but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality ; the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete, the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded ; a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself so that it may be developed in the life of the race. To go into all that this implies, would be too large

a subject to be entered upon here ; it is enough to point out that in this direction lies the eventual road. No doubt, if this is only an idea like the rest, it will go the way of all ideas ; but if it is at all a truth of our being, then it must be the truth to which all is moving and in it must be found the means of a fundamental, an inner, a complete, a real human unity which would be the one secure base of a unification of human life. A spiritual oneness creating a psychological oneness which would not depend upon intellectual or other uniformity, and compelling a oneness of life which would also not depend on its mechanical means of unification, but would find itself enriched by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence.

Could such a realisation develop rapidly in mankind, we might then solve the problem of unification in a deeper and truer way from the inner truth to the outer forms. Until then, the attempt to bring it about by mechanical means must proceed. But the higher hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realise this truth and seek to develop it in themselves, so that when the mind of man is ready to escape from its mechanical bent,—perhaps when it finds that its mechanical solutions are all temporary and disappointing,—the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection.

The Future Poetry

THE CHARACTER OF ENGLISH POETRY

(2)

What kind or quality of poetry should we naturally expect from a national mind so constituted ? The Anglo-Saxon strain is dominant and in that circumstance there lay just a hazardous possibility that there might have been no poetical literature at all. The Teutonic nations have in this field been conspicuous by their silence or the rarity of their speech. After the old rude epics, saga or Nibelungenlied, we have to wait till quite recent times for poetic utterance, nor, when it came, was it rich or abundant. In Germany a brief period of strong productive culture in which the great names of Goethe and Heine rise out of a mass of more or less vigorous verse talent rather than poetical genius, and after them again silence ; in the North the solitary genius of Ibsen. Holland, another Teutonic country which developed an art of a considerable but a wholly objective power, is mute in poetry. It would almost seem that there is still something too thick and heavy in the strength and depth of the Teutonic composition for the ethereal light and fire of the poetic word to make its way freely through the intellectual and vital envelope. What has saved the English mind from a like taciturnity ? Certainly, it must have been the mixture of racial elements, sublimating the material temperament, with the submerged Celtic genius coming in as a decisive force to liberate and uplift the poetic spirit. And as a necessary aid we have the unique historical accident of the reshaping of a Teutonic tongue by French and Latinistic influences which gave it clearer and more flowing forms and turned it into a fine though difficult linguistic material sufficiently malleable, sufficiently plastic for Poetry to produce her larger and finer effects, sufficiently difficult to compel her to put forth her greatest energies. A stuff of speech which, without being harsh and inapt, does not tempt by too great a facility, but offers a certain

resistance in the material, increases the strength of the artist by the measure of the difficulty conquered and can be thrown into shapes at once of beauty and of concentrated power. That is eminently the character of the English language.

At any rate we have this long continuity of poetic production. And once supposing a predominantly Anglo-Saxon national mind to express itself in poetry, we should, ignoring for a moment the Celtic emergence, expect the groundwork to be a strong objective poetry, a powerful presentation of the forms of external life, action and character in action, the pleasant or the melancholy outsidings of Nature, the robust play of the will and the passions, a vigorous vital and physical verse. Even we might look for a good deal of deviation into subjects and motives for which prose will always be the more adequate and characteristic instrument, nor should we be surprised at a self-styled Augustan age which would make them the greater part of its realm and indulge with a self-satisfied contentment in a "criticism" of external life, the poetry of political and ecclesiastical controversy, didactic verse, satire. There would be considerable power of narrative and a great energy in the drama of character and incident, but a profounder use of the narrative and dramatic forms would not be looked for; at most we might have in the end the dramatic analysis of character. The romantic element would be of the external Teutonic kind sensational and outward, appealing to the life and the senses, not the delicate and beautiful, the imaginative and spiritual Celtic romanticism. We should have perhaps much poetical thinking or even poetical philosophy of a rather obvious kind, sedate, or vigorous, prompt and direct, or robustly powerful, but not the finer and subtler poetical thought which comes easily to the clear Latin intellect. Form too of a kind we might hope for, though we could not be quite sure of it, at best bright and plain or strongly balanced, not either those greater forms in which a high

and deep creative thought presides over the more exquisite forms which a delicate sense of beauty or a subtle poetic intuition creates. Both the greater and more profound and the subtler intensities of style and rhythm would be absent ; but there would be a boldly forcible or a well-beaten energy of speech and much of the more metallic vigours of verse. This side of the national mind would prepare us for English poetry as it was until Chaucer and beyond, the ground-type of the Elizabethan drama, the work of Dryden and Pope, the whole mass of eighteenth-century verse, Cowper, Scott, Wordsworth in his more outward moments, Byron without his Titanism and unrest, the poetry of Browning. For these we need not go outside the Anglo-Saxon temperament.

That also would give, but subject to a potent alchemy of transformation the basic form and substance of most English poetry. That alchemy we can fairly attribute to the submerged Celtic element which emerges, as time goes on, in bright upstreamings and sometimes in exceptional outbursts of power. It comes up in a blaze of colour, light, emotion and imaginative magic ; in a hungering for beauty in its more subtle and delicately sensuous forms, for the ideal which escapes definition and yet has to be seized in forms ; in a subtler romance ; in a lyrical intoxication. It casts into the mould a higher urge of thought, not the fine, calm and measured poetical thinking of the Greeks and the Latin races which deals sovereignly with life within the limits of the intellect and the inspired reason, but an excitement of thought seeking for something beyond itself and behind life through the intensities of poetical sight. It brings in a look upon Nature which pierces beyond her outsides and her external spirit and lays its touch on the mysteries of her inner life and sometimes on that in her which is most intimately spiritual. It awakens rare outbreaks of mysticism, a vein of subtler sentiment, a more poignant pathos ; it refines passion from a violence of the vital being into an

intensity of the soul, modifies vital sensuousness into a thing of imaginative beauty by a warmer aesthetic perception. It carries with it a seeking for exquisite lyrical form, touches narrative poetry to finer issues, throws its romantic beauty and force and fire and its greater depth of passion across the drama and makes it something more than a tumultuous external action and heavily powerful character-drawing. At one period it strives to rise beyond the English mould, seems about to disengage itself and reveal through poetry the Spirit in things. In language and music it is always a quickening and refining force; where it can do nothing more, it breathes a more intimate energy and, where it gets its freer movement, creates that intensity of style and rhythm, that force of imaginative vision and that peculiar beauty of turn which are the highest qualities of English poetry.

The various commingling or separating of these two elements marks the whole later course of the literature and they present as their effect a side of failure and defect and a side of achievement. There are evidently two opposite powers at work in the same field, often compelled to labour in the same mind at a common production, and when two such opposites can coalesce, seize each other's motives and become one, the very greatest achievement becomes possible. For they fill in each other's deficiencies, light each other up with a new light and bring in a fresh revelation which neither by itself could have accomplished. The greatest things in English poetry have come where this fusion was effected in the creative mind and soul of the poet. But that could not always be done and there arises an uncertainty of motive, an unsureness of touch, an oscillation. It does not prevent great triumphs of poetic power, but does prevent a high equality and sustained perfection of self-expression and certainty of form. We must expect inequality in all human work, but not necessarily on this scale or with so frequent and extensive a falling below what should be the normal level.

To the same uncertainty may be attributed the abrupt starts and turns of the course of English poetry, its want of conscious continuity,—for there is a secret and inevitable continuity which we shall have to disengage. It takes a very different course from the external life of the nation which has always been faithful to its inner motive and spirit and escaped from the shattering and suddenly creative changes that have at once afflicted and quickened the life of other peoples. The revolutions of the spirit of English poetry are of an astonishing decisiveness and abruptness. We can mark off first the early English poetry which found its solitary greater expression in Chaucer ; indeed it marks itself off by an absolute exhaustion and cessation. The magnificent Elizabethan outburst has another motive, spirit, manner of expression, which seems to have nothing to do with the past ; it is self-born under the impulse of a new age and environment. As this dies away, we have the lonely figure of Milton with his strenuous effort at an intellectual poetry cast in the type of the ancients. The age which succeeds is that of a trivial intellectuality which does not follow the lead of Milton and is the exact contrary of the Elizabethan form and spirit, the thin and arid reign of Pope and Dryden. Another violent breaking away, a new outburst of wonderful freshness gives us the poetry of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Blake with another spirit and another language of the spirit. The Victorian period did not deny their influences ; it felt them in the form of its work, and we might have expected it to have gone forward with what had been only a great beginning that did not arrive at its full fruition. But it did nothing of the kind ; it deviated into a new way which has nothing to do with the finer spirit of the preceding poets and fell off into an intellectual, artistic, carefully wrought, but largely external poetry. And now we have this age which is still trying to find itself, but in its most characteristic tendencies seems to be a rejection of the Victorian forms and motives. These re

versals and revolutions of the spirit are not in themselves a defect or a disability ; they simply mean that English poetical literature has been a series of bold experiments less shackled by the past than in countries which have a stronger sense of cultural tradition. Revolutions are distracting things, but they are often good for the human soul ; for they bring a rapid opening of new horizons.

Here comes in the side of success and achievement. By the natural law of compensation it is gained by a force which answers to the defects and limitations ; it has those for its price. For nowhere else has individual genius found so free a field, been able to work so directly out of itself and follow so boldly its own line of poetic adventure. Form is a great power, but sureness of form is not everything. A strong tradition of form gives a sure ground upon which genius can work in safety and be protected from its own wanderings ; but it limits and stands in the way of daring individual adventure. The spirit of adventure, if its path is strewn with accidents, stumblings or fatal casualties, brings, when it does succeed, new revelations which are worth all the price paid for them. English poetry is full of such new revelations. Its richness, its constant freshness, its lavish expenditure of genius exulting in freedom, delivered from all meticulous caution, its fire and force of imagination, its lambent energy of poetic speech, its constant self-liberation into intensest beauty of self-expression are the rewards of its courage and its liberty. These things are of the greatest value in poetry. They lead besides to possibilities which are of the highest importance to the poetry of the future.

We may briefly anticipate and indicate in what manner. We have to accept one constant tendency of the spirit of English poetry, which loves to dwell with all its weight upon the presentation of life and action, of feeling and passion, to give that its full force and to make it the basis and the source and, not only the point of reference, but the utility of all else. A strong hold upon this life, the

earth-life, is the characteristic of the English mind, and it is natural that it should take possession of its poetry. The pure Celtic genius leans towards the opposite extreme, seems to care little for the earth-life for its own sake, has little hold on it or only a light and ethereal hold, accepts it as a starting-point for the expression of other-life, is attracted by all that is hidden and secret. The Latin mind insists on the presentation of life, but for the purposes of thought; its eye is on the universal truths and realities of which it is the visible expression,—not the remoter, the spiritual or soul-truths, but those which present themselves to the clarities of the intelligence. But the English mind looks at life and loves it for its own sake, in all its externalities, its play of outer individualities, its immediate subjective idiosyncracies. Even when it is strongly attracted by other motives, the intellectual, the aesthetic or the spiritual, it seldom follows these with a completely disinterested fidelity, but comes back with them on the external life and tries to subject them to its mould. This turn is not universal,—Blake escapes from it,—nor the single dominant power,—Keats and Shelley and Wordsworth have their hearts elsewhere; but it is a constant power; it attracts even the poets who have not a real genius for it and vitiates their work by the immixture of an alien motive.

This objective and external turn might be strong enough in some other arts,—fiction, for instance, or sculpture,—to create a clear national tradition and principle of form, but not easily in poetry. For here the mere representation of life cannot be enough, however vivid or subjected to the law of poetic beauty it may be. Poetry must drive at least at a presentation from within and not at simple artistic reproduction, and the principle of presentation must be something more than that of the eye on the visible object. It is by a process from within, a passing of it through some kind of intimately subjective vision that life is turned into poetry. If this subjective

medium is the inspired reason or the intuitive mind, the external presentation of life gives place inevitably to an interpretation, a presentation in which its actual lines are either neglected or subordinated in order that some inner truth of it may emerge. But in English poetry the attempt is to be or at least to appear true to the actual lines of life, to hold up a mirror to Nature. It is the mirror then which has to do the poetising of life ; the vital, the imaginative, the emotional temperament of the poet is the reflecting medium and it has to supply unaided the creative and poetical element. We have then a faithfully unfaithful reflection which always amounts to a transformation, because the temperament of the poet lends to life and Nature its own hues, its own lines, its own magnitudes. But the illusion of external reality, of an "imitation" of Nature is created,—the illusion which has been for so long a first canon of Western artistic conceptions,—and the English mind which carries this tendency to an extreme, feels then that it is building upon the safe foundation of the external and the real ; it is satisfied of the earth even when it is singing in the heavens.

But this sole reliance on the temperament of the poet has certain strong results. It gives an immense importance to individuality, much greater than that which it must always have in poetical creation : the transformation of life and Nature in the individuality becomes almost the whole secret of this poetry. Therefore English poetry is much more powerfully and consciously personal and individual than that of any other language, aims much less directly at the impersonal and universal. This individual subjective element creates enormous differences between the work of poets of the same age ; they cannot escape from the common tendencies, but give to them a quite independent turn and expression, subordinate them to the assertion of the individuality ; in other literatures, until recently, the reverse has oftener happened. Besides, the higher value given to the intensity of the imaginative,

vital or emotional response, favours and is perhaps a first cause of that greater intensity of speech and immediate vision which is the strength of English poetry. For since the heightening cannot come mainly from the power and elevation of the medium through which life is seen, as in Greek and ancient Indian poetry, it has to come almost entirely from the individual response in the poet, his force of personal utterance, his intensity of personal vision.

Three general characteristics emerge. The first is a constant reference and return of the higher poetical motives to the forms of external life, as if the enriching of that life were its principal artistic aim. The second is a great force of subjective individuality and personal temperament as a leading power of the poetic creation. The third is a great intensity of speech and ordinarily of a certain kind of direct vision. But in the world's literature generally these are the tendencies that have been on the increase and two of them at least are likely to be persistent. There is everywhere a considerable stressing of the individual subjective element, a drift towards making the most of the poet's personality, an aim at a more vivid response and the lending of new powers of colour and line from within to the vision of life and Nature, a search for new intensities of word and rhythm which will translate into speech a deeper insight. In following out the possible lines of the future the defect of the English mind is its inability to follow the higher motives disinterestedly to their deepest and largest creative results, but this is being remedied by new influences. The entrance of the pure Celtic temperament into English poetry through the Irish revival is likely to do much; the contribution of the Indian mind in work like Tagore's may act in the same direction.

If this change is effected, the natural powers of the English spirit will be of the highest value to the future poetry. For that poetry is likely to move to the imperson-

al and universal, not through the toning down of personality and individuality, but by their heightening to a point where they are liberated into the impersonal and universal expression. Subjectivity is likely to be its greater power, the growth to the universal subjective enriched by all the forces of the personal soul-experience. The high intensity of speech which English poetry has brought to bear upon all its material, its power of giving the fullest and richest value to the word and the image, is needed for the expression of the values of the spiritual, which will be one of the aims of a higher intuitive utterance. If the pursuit of the higher godheads into their own sphere will be one of its endeavours, their return upon the earth-life to transform our vision of it will be its other side. If certain initial movements we can even now see in English poetry outline themselves, this long stream of strong creation and utterance may arrive at a point where it will discover a supreme utility for all its past powers in another more comprehensive motive into which their strands can be successfully interwoven : it may achieve clear and powerful forms of a new intuitive utterance in which the Anglo-Celtic spirit will find its highest self-expression. The Elizabethan poet wrote in the spacious days of its first birth into greatness,

Or who can tell for what great work in hand

The greatness of our style is now ordained ?

What powers it shall bring in, what spirits command ?

It has since brought in many powers, commanded many spirits ; but it may be that the richest powers, the highest and greatest spirit yet remain to be found and commanded.

The Arya's Fourth Year

We close this month the fourth year of the "Arya," and bring to a conclusion at the same time the "Psychology of Social Development", the "Ideal of Human Unity" and the first series of the "Essays on the Gita." A few more chapters will complete the "Life Divine." We are therefore well in view of the completion of the first part of the work which we had proposed to ourselves in starting this philosophical monthly, and we take the opportunity to say a few words upon the principle which has governed our writing and which the difficulty of a serial exposition on several lines at a time, scattering and breaking up the total impression, may have prevented some of our readers from grasping in its entirety.

We had not in view at any time a review or magazine in the ordinary sense of the word, that is to say, a popular presentation or criticism of current information and current thought on philosophical questions. Nor was it, as in some philosophical and religious magazines in India, the restatement of an existing school or position of philosophical thought cut out in its lines and needing only to be popularised and supported. Our idea was the thinking out of a synthetic philosophy which might be a contribution to the thought of the new age that is coming upon us. We start from the idea that humanity is moving to a great change of its life which will even lead to a new life of the race,—in all countries where men think, there is now in various forms that idea and that hope,—and our aim has been to search for the spiritual, religious and other truth which can enlighten and guide the race in this movement and endeavour. The spiritual experience and the general truths on which such an attempt could be based, were already present to us, otherwise we should

have had no right to make the endeavour at all ; but the complete intellectual statement of them and their results and issues had to be found. This meant a continuous thinking, a high and subtle and difficult thinking on several lines, and this strain, which we had to impose on ourselves, we were obliged to impose also on our readers. This too is the reason why we have adopted the serial form which in a subject like philosophy has its very obvious disadvantages, but was the only one possible.

Our original intention was to approach the synthesis from the starting-point of the two lines of culture which divide human thought and are now meeting at its apex, the knowledge of the West and the knowledge of the East ; but owing to the exigencies of the war this could not be fulfilled. The "Arya" except for one unfinished series has been an approach to the highest reconciling truth from the point of view of the Indian mentality and Indian spiritual experience, and Western knowledge has been viewed from that standpoint. Here the main idea which has governed our writing, was imposed on us by the very conditions of the problem. All philosophy is concerned with the relations between two things, the fundamental truth of existence and the forms in which existence presents itself to our experience. The deepest experience shows that the fundamental truth is truth of the Spirit ; the other is the truth of life, truth of form and shaping force and living idea and action. Here the West and East have followed divergent lines. The West has laid most emphasis on truth of life and for a time come to stake its whole existence upon truth of life alone, to deny the existence of spirit or to relegate it to the domain of the unknown and unknowable ; from that exaggeration it is now beginning to return. The East has laid most emphasis on truth of the Spirit and for a time came, at least in India, to stake its whole existence upon that truth alone, to neglect the possibilities of life or to limit it to a narrow development or a fixed status ; the East too is beginning to return from this exaggeration. The West is reawaking to the truth of the Spirit and the spiritual possibilities of life, the East is reawaking to the truth of Life and tends towards a new application to it of its spiritual knowledge. Our view is that the antinomy created between them is an unreal one. Spirit being the fun-

damental truth of existence, life can be only its manifestation ; Spirit must be not only the origin of life but its basis, its pervading reality and its highest and total result. But the forms of life as they appear to us are at once its disguises and its instruments of self-manifestation. Man has to grow in knowledge till they cease to be disguises and grow in spiritual power and quality till they become in him its perfect instruments. To grow into the fullness of the divine is the true law of human life and to shape his earthly existence into its image is the meaning of his evolution. This is the fundamental tenet of the philosophy of the Arya.

This truth had to be worked out first of all from the metaphysical point of view ; for in philosophy metaphysical truth is the nucleus of the rest, it is the statement of the last and most general truths on which all the others depend or in which they are gathered up. Therefore we gave the first place to the "Life Divine." Here we start from the Vedantic position, its ideas of the Self and mind and life, of Sachchidananda and the world, of Knowledge and Ignorance, of rebirth and the Spirit. But Vedanta is popularly supposed to be a denial of life, and this is no doubt a dominant trend it has taken. Though starting from the original truth that all is the Brahman, the Self, it has insisted in the end that the world is simply not-Brahman, not-Self ; it has ended in a paradox. We have attempted on the contrary to establish from its data a comprehensive Adwaita. We have shown that mind and life and matter are derivations from the Self through a spiritual mind or supermind which is the real support of cosmic existence and by developing mind into that man can arrive at the real truth of the spirit in the world and the real truth and highest law of life. The Self is Sachchidananda and there is no incurable antinomy between that and the world ; only we see the world through the eyes of the Ignorance and we have to see it through the eyes of the Knowledge. Our ignorance itself is only knowledge developing out of its involution in the apparent nescience of Matter and on its way to a return to its conscious integrality. To accomplish that return and manifest the spiritual life in the human existence is the opportunity given by the successions of rebirth. We accept the truth of evolution, not so much in the physical

form given to it by the west as in its philosophical truth, the involution of life and mind and spirit here in matter and their progressive manifestation. At the summit of this evolution is the spiritual life, the life divine.

It was necessary to show that these truths were not inconsistent with the old Vedantic truth, therefore we included explanations from this point of view of the Veda, two of the Upanishads and the Gita. But the Veda has been obscured by the ritualists and the scholiasts. Therefore we showed in a series of articles, initially only as yet, the way of writing of the Vedic mystics, their system of symbols and the truths they figure. Among the Upanishads we took the Isha and the Kena; to be full we should have added the Taittiriya, but it is a long one and for it we had no space. The Gita we are treating as a powerful application of truth of spirit to the largest and most difficult part of the truth of life, to action, and a way by which action can lead us to birth into the Spirit and can be harmonised with the spiritual life. Truth of philosophy is of a merely theoretical value unless it can be lived, and we have therefore tried in the Synthesis of Yoga to arrive at a synthetical view of the principles and methods of the various lines of spiritual self-discipline and the way in which they can lead to an integral divine life in the human existence. But this is an individual self-development, and therefore it was necessary to show too how our ideal can work out in the social life of mankind. In the "Psychology of Social Development" we have indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In the "Ideal of Human Unity" we have taken the present trend of mankind towards a closer unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting to them in order that real human unity may be achieved.

Our plan has compelled us to deal mainly with first principles and work them out in their fullness. In future we do not propose to start any other long series of this kind, but to have more short articles with a broader, more direct and, as far as possible, more popular treatment. We shall also permit ourselves a freer range and diversity, so far as that is permissible in a philosophical review.

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Philosophy

